DO THE PALESTINIANS REALLY WANT PALESTINE? The Editors

PRIMO LEVI'S SECRET
Ruth Franklin

SOCCER'S SECRET APPEAL
Franklin Foer

THE NEW REPUBLIC

INVISIBLE MAN

THE MOST INTRIGUING PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN

Jonathan Cohn

#BXBKDML ********5-DIGIT 94301
#TNR0000068171/5#86 05JAN04 21300
RON K UNZ 1304
555 BRYANT ST # 371 P9
PALO ALTO CA 94301-1704

95CAN 26
742 4

JULY 1, 2002

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For eighty-five years,
Planned Parenthood has been helping women
and families make responsible choices...

Now here's one responsible choice
we urge Congress to make:

Require insurance companies to cover prescription birth control.

Contraceptive Coverage:
It's fair. It's responsible. And it's time.

Planned Parenthood®
Action Fund, Inc.

For more information check out
www.plannedparenthood.org

Paid for by the Planned Parenthood Action Fund, Inc.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts

WASHINGTON, D.C.
JULY 1, 2002
ISSUE 4,563

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
MARTIN PERETZ

EDITOR
PETER BEINART
Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER
Executive Editor
CHRISTOPHER ORR
Senior Editors
JONATHAN CHAIT, JONATHAN COHN, MICHELLE COTTLE, GREGG EASTERBROOK, JOHN B. JUDIS, LAWRENCE F. KAPLAN, ANDREW SULLIVAN, JAMES WOOD
Legal Affairs JEFFREY ROSEN
Managing Editor SARAH BLUSTAIN
Assistant Managing Editor AMANDA FAZZONE
Films: STANLEY KAUFFMANN
Theater: ROBERT BRUSTEIN
Poetry: GLYN MAXWELL
Art: JED PERL
Architecture: MARTIN FILLER
Dance: JENNIFER HOMANS
The New Republic Online
Assistant Editor CHRISTIANE CULHANE
Director of Business Operations ARI GERSEN
New Republic Books (BASIC BOOKS)
VANESSA MOBLEY
Contributing Editors
FOUAD AJAMI, AKHIL REED AMAR, PETER BERKOWITZ, PAUL BERMAN, JEAN BETHKE ELSHTAIN, NATHAN GLAZER, ANTHONY GRAFTON, DAVID GRANN, YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI, ANN HULBERT, TONY JUDT, ROBERT KAGAN, MICHAEL KINSLEY, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, JEREMY MCCARTER, JOHN MCWHORTER, SHERWIN B. NULAND, DAVID RIEFF, MAGGIE SCARF, LEE SIEGEL, RONALD STEEL, CASS R. SUNSTEIN, MARGARET TALBOT, E.V. THAW, HELEN VENDLER, MICHAEL WALZER, SEAN WILENTZ, ALAN WOLFE, ROBERT WRIGHT
Contributing Artists
JACK COUGHLIN, VINT LAWRENCE, DAVID SCHORR, TOM TOLES
Associate Editors
MICHAEL CROWLEY, FRANKLIN FOER, RYAN LIZZA, JASON ZENGERLE
Associate Literary Editor RUTH FRANKLIN
Art Direction JOE HEROUN, CHRISTINE CAR/H2C
Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY
Production and Information-Technology Director
BRUCE STEINKE
Production Manager HENRY RIGGS
Assistant Editors
NOAM SCHEIBER, SARAH WILDMAN, SACHA ZIMMERMAN
Assistant to the Editor ASHER PRICE
Assistant Literary Editor ERIN LEIB
Assistant Poetry Editor MELANIE REHAK
Reporter-Researcher
SPENCER ACKERMAN

PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER
STEPHANIE SANDBERG
General Manager
ANNETTE POCICA
ADVERTISING SALES AND MARKETING
Associate Publisher
ELISE ADDE
Director of Advertising, West
JOAN STAPLETON TOOLEY
Director of Advertising, New York
TIM WHITING
Publishing Consultant DAVID NUDO
Marketing Director SARA ZYSKOWSKI
Associate Advertising Manager MEREDITH COSSA
Marketing Assistant ETHAN FISCHER
FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
Acting Controller MICHAEL SOUTHALL
Accounting Assistant VANESSA WILSON
Business Assistant SARA DEGRAEVE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Chairman ROGER HERTOG
MARTIN PERETZ
MICHAEL STEINHARDT

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Is Hitler dead and gone? Or just dead? &c.

6 **PETER BEINART** TRB: UNDERSTATE How to change Pakistan.

7 **THE EDITORS** SUICIDE BOMBING The Palestinians v. Palestine.

8 **NOTEBOOK** José Padilla v. Yucca Mountain, &c.

10 **EUNY HONG-KORAL** TALLINN DISPATCH: VISION QUEST Can music unite Europe?

12 **JONATHAN CHAIT** GROUP THINK Why pollsters manufacture swing voters.

14 **MICHAEL SEAN WINTERS** SERVICE STATION The bishops' next challenge: themselves.

16 **GREGG EASTERBROOK** AIR CONDITION Why are enviros and industrialists screaming about Bush 's Clean Air adjustments? Because there's nothing else to complain about.

18 **JONATHAN COHN** INVISIBLE MAN Vermont Governor Howard Dean could be the Democrats' John McCain—the presidential insurgent whose new ideas jolt a tired party establishment. Unfortunately, the way the Democrats have organized their 2004 primary, Dean's new ideas may never get heard.

24 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: APPRECIATION, PLEASE Ian Holm and Anthony Hopkins are just keeping busy in two recent films.

25 **RUTH FRANKLIN** THE EXPERIMENT *The Double Bond: Primo Levi, A Biography* by Carole Angier

33 **DALE PECK** THE MOODY BLUES *The Black Veil: A Memoir With Digressions* by Rick Moody

38 **HILLEL HALKIN** NOT SO FAST *Elvis in Jerusalem: Post-Zionism and the Americanization of Israel* by Tom Segev, translated by Haim Watzman

40 **SIMON ARMITAGE** POEM *All for One*

42 **FRANKLIN FOER** FLORENCE DIARIST: FAIR BALL

On the Cover : Illustration by CRAIG FRAZIER
On the Web : www.thenewrepublic.com

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 227, Number 1, Issue 4,563, July 1, 2002. (Printed in the United States on June 19, 2002.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated March 4 & 11, April 1 & 8, July 8 & 15, August 5 & 12, August 19 & 26, September 9 & 16, December 2 & 9, and December 30, 2002 & January 6, 2003) at 1331 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Telephone (202) 508-4444. For advertising inquiries, please contact Meredith Cossa at (202) 508-4444 or our NY sales office at (212) 465-8447. Yearly subscriptions, $59.94; foreign, $99.94 (U.S. funds); Canada, $79.94 (U.S. funds). Back issues, $8.00 domestic and $10.00 foreign/Canada (includes postage & handling). **© 2002 by The New Republic, LLC.** **(ISSN 0028-6583). Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Rights and permissions: fax (202) 628-9383. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, Canadian Periodical Index, CD-ROM, issue, and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Postmaster: Send changes of address to The New Republic, P.O. Box 37298, Boone, IA 50037-0298. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope (e-mail address: tnr@aol.com). For subscription inquiries or problems call 1-800-827-1289 or visit our website at www.thenewrepublic.com.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Court order

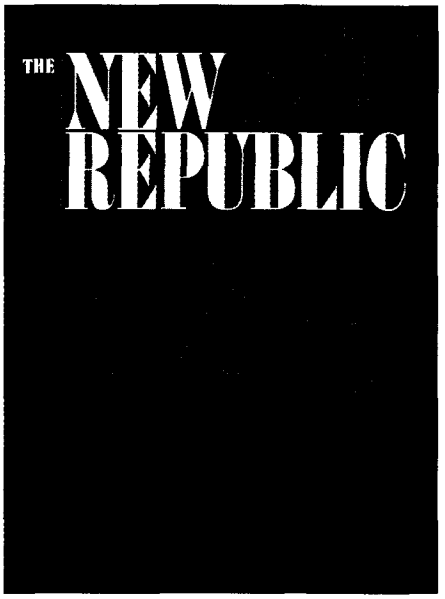
TO THE EDITORS:
Ryan Lizza is exactly right about Alberto Gonzales's chances for the U. S. Supreme Court ("Friend of the Court," May 27). Because all Texas judges are elected, the campaign process and the collection of campaign contributions have a significant impact on our judiciary. It is more than a minor point, therefore, to note Lizza's error in reporting that Texas Supreme Court justices are initially appointed. That is only true when there is a vacancy, as was true for Gonzales. Otherwise, a candidate for the Texas Supreme Court is required to run for office and might easily raise and spend a million dollars in a campaign. Fifteen thousand dollar contributions from the political action committees of Enron and Vinson & Elkins would just be the proverbial tip of the iceberg.

DAVID HUDSON
Tyler, Texas

TO THE EDITORS:
Ryan Lizza reports that in early May, Alberto Gonzales "found himself motoring out to a Ritz-Carlton in the Virginia suburbs to hang out with creationists and Christian reconstructionists ... that includes ... R.J. Rushdoony, a reconstructionist who advocates replacing the American legal system with the injunctions of the Old Testament." Lizza's error is twofold: First, Rushdoony died on February 8, 2001; second, Rushdoony did not advocate replacing the U.S. legal system with the injunctions of the Old Testament, but rather—like most of our Founding Fathers—advocated a legal system consistent with the wisdom contained in the Old Testament. I know that liberal secularists have enjoyed using caricatures of Rushdoony's ideas to scare their followers into knee-jerk anti-Christian reactions, but perhaps now that Rushdoony is dead you could find a new straw man onto which to project your anti-Christian bigotries.

ERIC G. ENLOW
Saint Louis, Missouri

RYAN LIZZA REPLIES:
David Hudson is correct. In explaining why Alberto Gonzales was both appointed and also ran for reelection, I should have stated that appointments only occur when there is a vacancy. Eric G. Enlow's ellipses-filled quotation excises the most important part of my sentence: I never said R. J. Rushdoony was at the Council for National Policy



(CNP) event. I said CNP was "an umbrella group of social conservatives that includes" Rushdoony. Because CNP operates in secrecy and refused to talk to me, I relied on the only known CNP membership list available, which is from 1998 and includes Rushdoony. But Enlow is correct that Rushdoony—a theocrat who famously advocated the death penalty for homosexuals (stoning was his preferred method), adulterers, abortionists, and disobedient children—is now dead. As for Rushdoony's beliefs, a sympathetic obituary in the religious journal *First Things* noted that he reproached Christians who did not "advocate the complete submission of the state to the Mosaic law." Rushdoony did not promote a legal system "consistent" with the Old Testament; but as the magazine *The Christian Century* has noted, he "espoused replacing civil law with biblical law."

Evil incarnate

TO THE EDITORS:
While Adolf Hitler is indeed long dead, it does not necessarily mean, as Leon Wieseltier implies, that he is no longer relevant ("Hitler Is Dead," May 27). On the contrary, there is a growing sense in the Jewish world that his legacy has been taken out of the mothballs and is again being paraded openly in the vast streets where the Holocaust took place. In that respect, the obvious and abject failure of his pathetic European successors on the extreme right to market his message to any significant segment of mainstream European society pales in comparison to its enthusiastic adoption by anti-globalization supporters on the extreme left and Europe's new underclass of disenchanted Muslim emigrants—not to mention the leaders of their countries of origin. And in the most ironic twist of all, it is most blatantly being expressed in the new equation of perverted morality that has already rallied millions of adherents: Israel=Nazi Germany. Indeed, Hitler's legacy lives on.

It is the renewed vigor of those willing to parade under signs promoting the canard that the Jewish state most closely resembles the Third Reich that, among other things, has raised the anxiety level of Jews the world over. If we add the carnage of 21 months of practically nonstop Palestinian terror attacks, whose main goal is to maximize the mass murder of Jews, one can easily understand why a people traumatized by the Holocaust might find themselves thinking about the horrors of World War II, even though the current situation is inherently different. The very events whose memory we hoped would protect us are purposely being used to attempt to destroy the state of Israel, which beside being the antithesis of Jewish helplessness and impotence during the Holocaust is the most concrete manifestation of why Jews could be reasonably certain that such tragedies would not recur.

Adolf Hitler may indeed be dead, but his legacy lives on and continues to cast its ominous shadow over the world in which Jews seek to reside as legitimate residents. The time has therefore come to admit that unpleasant truth and to deal with its consequences, not by pontificating against the use of Holocaust imagery lacking in historical accuracy, but by acknowledging that there is considerable cause for genuine concern even if Kristallnacht has not taken place again and the current French government is not the reincarnation of the Vichy regime.

DR. EFRAIM ZUROFF
Director
The Simon Wiesenthal Center
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITORS:
The main difference between Wieseltier and Israelis is that he experienced 9/11 while Israelis went through at least 70 suicide bombings and more than 25 car bombings since 1993, culminating in six consecutive suicide bombings in one week at the end of March. This is a phenomenon the likes of which the world had not yet seen. When you and your family can be blown to pieces any moment while shopping in a supermarket or returning a video, and you live like that day after day, the world looks a little bit different.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wieseltier writes: "If you think that the Passover massacre was like Kristallnacht, then you must also think that there cannot be a political solution to the conflict, and that the Palestinians have no legitimate rights or legitimate claims upon any part of the land, and there must never be a Palestinian state, and that force is all that will ever avail Israel." I do think that the Passover massacre was a Kristallnacht. But to deduce from this that I believe that Palestinians have no legitimate rights or legitimate claims is inaccurate. The problem is that the Palestinians have been using suicide bombers to achieve illegitimate goals.

Seventy-five percent of the Palestinian population approves of suicide bombers targeting Israeli civilians. This percentage is surely higher than the percentage of the German population in 1938 that was for the expulsion of the Jews. This 75 percent cannot be mitigated by saying that it was a response of an "occupied" population, since this massive consensus of hate comes after Ehud Barak's offer (now confirmed by Dennis Ross) to end the conflict in a peaceful and just way. This percentage is a result of years of indoctrination by a corrupt regime with the help of militant Islam.

I do not see the ideology of Hamas, the Islamic Jihad, or militant Islam in general to be any different from the totalitarian ideologies of Nazism and Stalinism. And yes, there is no political solution with the likes of Hamas and Osama bin Laden. This does not mean that there is no political solution at all. The solution will only come when Palestinians who are not Islamists come to the conclusion that it is impossible to destroy Israel and succeed in influencing the rest of the population over the objections of the Islamists. But how can we expect the non-Islamists to win when we cannot even identify the problem? Hitler may be dead, but militant Islam is not.

MLADEN ANDRIJASEVIC
Be'er Sheva, Israel

Material world

TO THE EDITORS:

Josh Gerstein is flat wrong in saying that, because the material-witness cases connected to the September 11 attacks are sealed, "attorneys are prohibited from publicly commenting on them" (April 22). As any lawyer knows—including Randy Hamud, upon whom Gerstein relies in making his erroneous assertion—there is a fundamental difference between court proceedings under seal (which the pending material-witness cases are) and court proceedings in which the attorneys are barred from making public comments (which the pending cases are *not*). Thus Chief Judge Michael Mukasey is surely right in stating that material-witness detainees and their lawyers could publicize their cases but generally choose not to do so. Notably, there is at least one prominent exception to this rule: Hamud himself. The October 15, 2001, *Wall Street Journal* quotes Hamud at length about several of his material-witness clients. Perhaps Gerstein should have been a little more skeptical of Hamud's self-serving claims about the law.

ZACHARY D. STERN
New York, New York

JOSH GERSTEIN REPLIES:

In my interviews, each of the lawyers representing material witnesses said he feared court sanctions if he revealed the facts the government set forth in the closed hearings. Randy Hamud says a federal judge in San Diego told him explicitly what he could say about his clients and what he could not. Gag orders that judges issued in other cases are among the items that remain under seal. To suggest that, even though they are officers of the court, lawyers are free to hand out sealed court filings and orders to the press defies logic and common sense. Any attorney doing that would risk a contempt citation.

Zachary D. Stern is correct that some lawyers have been more brazen about discussing their clients' predicaments, while others have chosen to refrain from any public comment. Some attorneys also have a bit more latitude to speak because facts about the material-witness cases they handled have become public when the witnesses were charged with crimes. In any event, I see little reason to be sanguine about the fact that some lawyers have sometimes hinted at what has gone on in secret hearings. The carefully or not-so-carefully chosen words of an advocate for one side of a court case are a poor substitute for allowing the press and public to witness the judicial process at work. ■

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Please address letters to Correspondence, TNR, 1331 H Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 (letters may also be sent electronically to tnr@aol.com). All letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be fewer than 200 words. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. Please do not send letters via fax.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Understate

GIVE THE BUSH administration credit. Less than one month ago India and Pakistan appeared headed for war; today they seem headed in the other direction. An early June trip to the region by Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, followed closely by a visit from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, elicited the Pakistani crackdown on Kashmiri terrorism that India had demanded at gunpoint. And in return, Armitage and Rumsfeld convinced New Delhi to pull back its warships and allow Pakistani planes access to its airspace—small concessions, but ones that cooled the war fever that had threatened to send South Asia over the brink.

That's the good news. The bad news is that without fundamental political change in both Pakistan and Kashmir, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf will eventually give Kashmiri terrorism the green light once again. Kashmir is to Pakistan what Taiwan is to China: the missing piece whose absence calls into question the entire national project. Pakistan was created as a sanctuary for South Asian Muslims, and abandoning Kashmir (the "K" in Pakistan) would undermine its claim to Punjab ("P"), Sindh ("S"), Baluchistan ("TAN"), and the other fractious provinces that share little beside Islam. Any Pakistani leader who turns his back on Kashmir imperils his hold on power. Musharraf should know—it was his predecessor's decision to back down during the Kashmir crisis of July 1999 that made the general's October coup possible.

To stop cross-border terrorism for good, Musharraf will need to convince his people that the Kashmiri struggle can be waged peacefully. And he will need to shift Pakistan's raison d'être from Islam to liberal, accountable governance. Neither is possible without sustained, U.S. pressure—comparable to America's long-standing role in the Middle East. Post-9/11, South Asia is an American sphere of influence, and unless the Bush administration starts treating it as such instead of just parachuting in to put out fires, Pakistan will go to the brink again and again—until India finally pushes it over.

It's no coincidence that in late April, just as cross-border terrorism was intensifying, Musharraf held a referendum extending his presidential term for five years. The referendum was a farce. Pakistan's Human Rights Commission said the ballot-rigging "exceeded our worst fears," and Musharraf won with 97.5 percent of the vote.

The Bush administration refused to criticize the referendum, probably because it wanted to support Musharraf in his battle against terrorism. But as the timing suggests, the Bushies have it exactly backward. By reneging on his promise to return Pakistan to democracy, Musharraf alienated the one sector of Pakistani society—the secular middle class—that might have backed his efforts to cut the ties between Kashmiri militants and the Pakistani state. Many middle-class Pakistanis realize that by fomenting jihad in Kashmir (as in Afghanistan), their government is fueling a toxic extremism that may one day boomerang against them. But they won't support Musharraf's fight against the extremists if it means abandoning democracy. By betraying them, Musharraf leaves himself with no liberal political base, and that may eventually force him to look to the fundamentalists and their Kashmiri jihad for support. (Which is exactly what happened in 1984, the last time a Pakistani dictator, General Zia ul-Haq, entrenched himself through a sham referendum.)

To prevent that, the Bush administration must reverse course and throw its weight behind Pakistani democracy, pressuring Musharraf to move toward a ceremonial presidential role while ceding power to a democratically elected parliament and prime minister. The Bush team has finally come to understand that without democracy the Palestinian Authority will keep making common cause with terrorists in order to perpetuate itself in power. The Bush administration needs to understand the same thing about Pakistan.

But democracy in Pakistan is only half the formula for enduring South Asian peace. The other half is democracy in Kashmir. Liberal Pakistanis may fear jihad, but even they are outraged by the terrible suffering of their Muslim brethren across the line of control. To drain Pakistani support for terrorism, Musharraf needs to show his people that Kashmiris can win their rights without resorting to terrorism. And to do that, he needs India's—and America's—help.

Kashmir hasn't always been a bloodbath. In fact, for most of India's history its nationalist movement was moderate and peaceful. Three things changed that. First, India revoked the state's broad autonomy over its domestic affairs, leaving Kashmiris chafing under direct rule from New Delhi. Second, India rigged elections in the region, prompting many nationalists to turn to violence. Third, Pakistan exploited this resentment—bringing Taliban-style fundamentalism to a previously secular nationalist movement. In 1987, 80 percent of Kashmiris turned out to vote in elections contested by nationalist parties that might have accepted autonomy rather than full independence. But New Delhi stuffed the ballot boxes for pro-government parties. And by the time India held state elections in 1997, only 10 percent of Kashmiris turned out; the main nationalist parties boycotted; and the region was engulfed in violence.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), India's Hindu nationalist ruling party, isn't serious about changing the situation in Kashmir. In 2000, when the Indian parliament considered restoring to Kashmir much of the autonomy it had revoked over the decades, the BJP defeated the measure. This September, Kashmiris are set to go to the polls again, and again the main nationalist alliance is boycotting. But the government official running the elections won't even meet with the boycotting nationalists, and the BJP just passed a draconian anti-terrorism law that will likely increase human rights violations in the already brutalized region.

India has long opposed foreign meddling in its governance of Kashmir. And the United States has abided by that. But the Bush team—which has forced Musharraf to back down twice in the last six months—today enjoys more leverage in New Delhi than any American administration in memory. And just as the U.S. parlayed its post-Gulf war prestige in the Middle East into the 1991 Madrid peace talks, it may now be able to parlay its post-Afghan war influence into an internationally mediated peace process for Kashmir. Over time, with British, Russian, and Chinese help, that process could recreate a moderate Kashmiri nationalism willing to accept Indian sovereignty in return for self-governance and human rights. And that, in turn, would buttress liberalism and secularism in Pakistan.

It's just the kind of intrusive, thankless effort this administration dreads. And it may not work. But given the political dynamic between India and Pakistan today, a dynamic that has sent the nuclear-armed neighbors to the brink of war twice this year and may well do so again, the real question isn't whether the Bush administration can risk a high-profile push for peace and democracy in South Asia. It's whether it can risk the alternative.

PETER BEINART

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Suicide Bombing

OF COURSE PALESTINIANS went and slaughtered Israelis: The president of the United States was about to propose the creation of a "provisional" Palestinian state. This presented the Palestinians with an emergency. The Palestinian dream was drawing closer to its realization; the possibility of a truce between Palestinians and Israelis was in the air again; territorial compromise with the Jews, and an elementary respect for their lives and their rights, was all that stood between occupation and statehood. Clearly this had to be stopped. The choice between rage and happiness seems to be an easy choice for the Palestinians, and so they regularly choose rage. A bus with schoolchildren, a street corner with baby carriages: Here was the answer to the threat that the resumption of a peace process posed to the Palestinians. But blow the bus and the street corner up and the threat could be averted, and the holy war could continue, and Allah—or at least Sheikh Ahmad Yassin's Allah—would be gratified.

Actually, the Palestinian depravity of this week was even worse, and more cynical. For no sooner had Hamas exploded the bus in Jerusalem than the Al Aqsa Martyrs Brigade exploded the street corner in Jerusalem: The secularists did not want to suffer in popularity for their failure to murder. In contemporary Palestine, suicide bombing is politically savvy. Yes, yes, the Palestinian community is divided, and there are many decent people who deplore the suicide bombings and aspire to get on with the business of self-government. But Israel cannot be expected to welcome stoically the internecine Palestinian debate while innocent men, women, and children—Jewish and Muslim—are regularly destroyed. The clarification of Palestinian identity is costing too many lives.

So what should Israel do? Strategically speaking, the Israelis may be reaching a breaking point. The Israeli incursions into "Area A" in the wake of the recent atrocities are as justified as the incursions in the wake of the massacre in Netanya a few months ago; but the media is reporting that they are more than that, that the current Israeli action represents a decision to "reoccupy" certain areas for security reasons. If so, it is worth remembering that the West Bank was originally occupied by Israel in the course of defending itself as well. It is not in Israel's interest to stay in "Area A". The last thing that Israel or that most Israelis are seeking is a greater burden of occupation in a hostile territory. They want a fence, not a fiefdom. Anyway, sooner or later the United States and the United Nations and the European Union (Cherie Blair explained about the suicide bombers that they are "young people [who] feel they have got no hope" and Jack Straw expressed his "compassion" for them) will soon force them out. What is taking place on the West Bank now is a police action that is proportionate to the crimes that are being policed; no less, but no more.

What Israel should not do is sacrifice its clarity about security and diplomacy to an obsession with Yasir Arafat. If last week's bombings prove anything, it is that the chairman of the Palestinian Authority has lost control of the Palestinian polity. He is as plainly irrelevant as Ariel Sharon used to say he is. This is bad news, because it means that the problem is not the leader but the community, and this is good news, because it means that the vain and cowardly old man will not stand in the way of diplomacy much longer.

But what should this diplomacy be? The American government, under the leadership of Colin Powell, is readying itself to offer the Palestinians provisional statehood. This is not diplomacy; this is pseudodiplomacy. A provisional Palestinian state is a phony Palestinian state, a chimera, a sop to the violent Palestinian streets, a capitulation to the Riyadh-Cairo analysis of the present crisis. A Palestinian state that is not created in a negotiation with Israel is not a Palestinian state that will live in peace with Israel. The legitimacy of the objective of Palestinian statehood is almost universally acknowledged in Israel; even Sharon speaks of its inevitability. But this great Israeli accommodation to reality should not be mocked by American attempts to appease the Palestinians for their bloody and dogmatic avoidance of negotiations for almost two years now. After all, Israel also has a problem that might be called "homeland security." For their provisional crackdowns on terrorism, will George W. Bush reward the Palestinians with a provisional state? If so, then he is a monumental hypocrite, and no friend of a genuine peace. ■

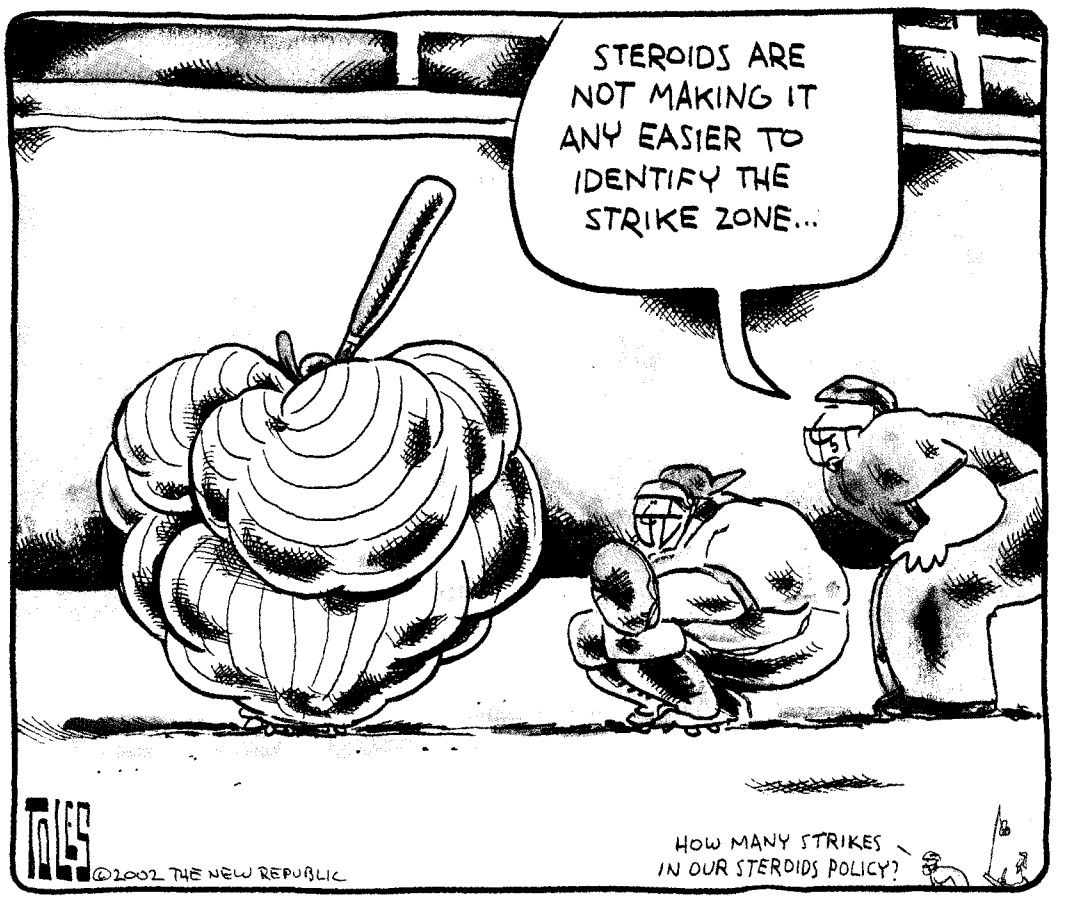
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTEBOOK

STOP HIM BEFORE HE LIES AGAIN: Back in Houston last week, President George W. Bush again told what is gradually becoming his favorite political anecdote: "You know, when I was one time campaigning in Chicago, a reporter said, 'Would you ever have a deficit?' I said, 'I can't imagine it, but there would be one if we had a war, or a national emergency, or a recession.' Never did I dream we'd get the trifecta." Even *we're* getting a little tired of pointing out that this story is almost certainly untrue. No reporter who covered the 2000 campaign can recall Bush ever having said anything like this; and despite repeated inquiries from the media, the White House has never produced any evidence that he did. (There are numerous examples, by contrast, of candidate Bush pledging not to touch the Social Security surplus under any condition.) The first public mention of Bush's exceptions came, conveniently enough, last August—just as it became evident that the tax cut and slowing economy would likely force him to dip into Social Security. Why does the truth or falsity of this anecdote matter? Because perhaps the key policy issue that divided Bush and Al Gore during the 2000 race was the Texas governor's massive tax cut proposal. Bush claimed there was enough money to continue paying down the debt, fund any additional spending needs that might arise, and still afford his tax cut; Gore claimed there wasn't. Gore was right. Bush's budget forecasts were a tapestry of rosy predictions, accounting gimmicks, and outright falsehoods that were already unraveling well before September 11. (Remember the trillion-dollar contingency fund that Bush was promising little more than one year ago? Us neither.) This is why Bush insists on reciting his fraudulent "war, recession, or national emergency" story at every possible opportunity—it gets him off the hook for the mountain of economic dishonesty he shoveled in order to pass the tax cut. And it's why as long as he keeps telling the story, we'll keep pointing out that it is almost certainly a lie.

DIRTY POLITICS: With a pivotal Senate vote approaching on whether to store nuclear waste at Nevada's Yucca Mountain, the plan's mostly Democratic opponents have found a new way to make their case: by invoking the recent arrest of alleged "dirty bomb" plotter José Padilla. "In this new era of reports of 'dirty bombs' and the real possibility that nuclear material of some kind could be stolen or hijacked, we're going to be moving nuclear material all over the country to Nevada," Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle told reporters this week. "If that doesn't heighten the prospect for serious harm and concern, I don't know what does." South Carolina's Democratic Governor Jim Hodges took Daschle's logic to its irrational extreme last week, issuing an executive order to block the transportation of weapons-grade plutonium on state roads and highways because of potential terrorist threats. But as we noted in a recent editorial ("Nuclear Waste," TNR, May 27), much of the nuclear material that would be transported to Yucca—secretly, under tight security, in extremely sturdy containers—is currently stored in alarmingly unsecured conditions, often near densely populated areas. It's hard to believe Daschle really thinks the next José Padilla is more likely to target an unannounced, high-security convoy than a poorly guarded facility with well-known vulnerabilities. Easier to believe is that Daschle can't resist the chance to pander to a potential swing state at the expense of the nation's security.

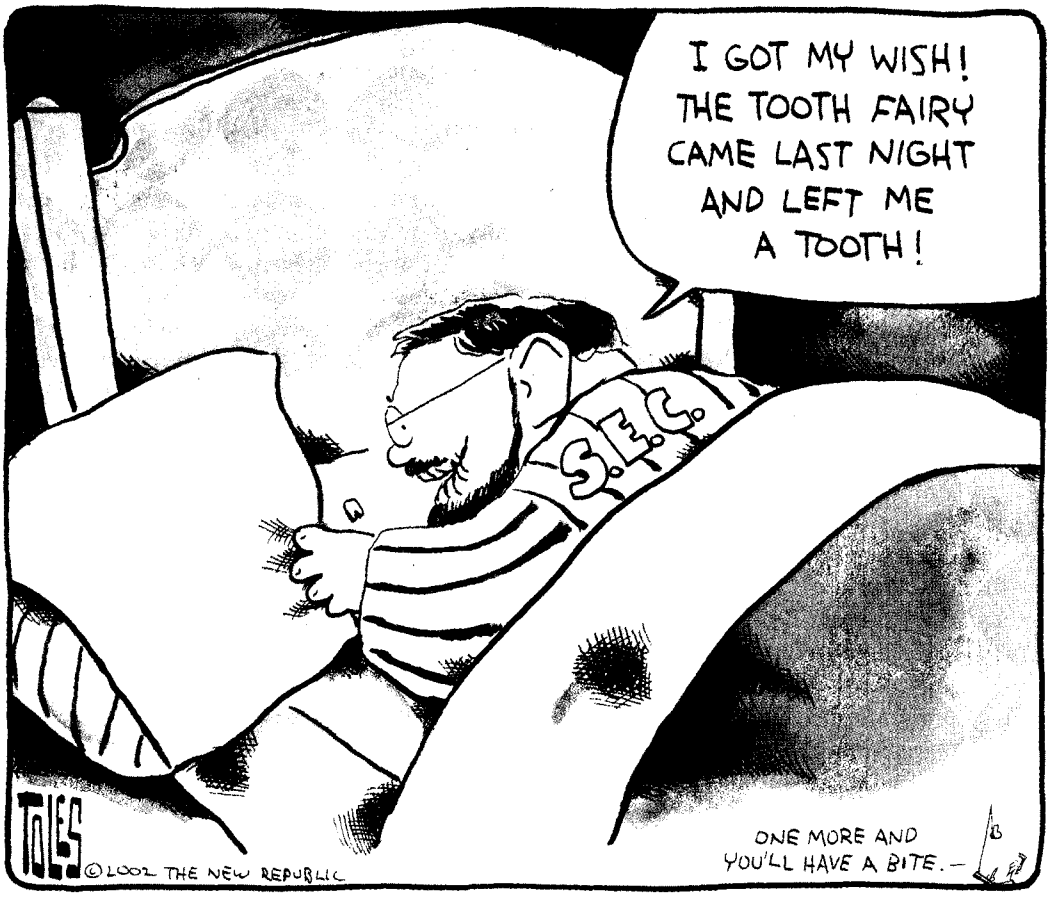
HOPE IN THE UNSEEN: Did reporter Ron Suskind make up the titillating quotes by Andy Card (in which he called Karl Rove "a beast" and said that with Karen Hughes gone


STEROIDS ARE NOT MAKING IT ANY EASIER TO IDENTIFY THE STRIKE ZONE...
TALES
©2002 THE NEW REPUBLIC
HOW MANY STRIKES IN OUR STEROIDS POLICY?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"the balance of what has worked up to now for George Bush, is gone, simply gone") that attracted so much attention in the July issue of *Esquire*? The Bush administration sure wants you to think so. After the article came out, White House Communications Director Dan Bartlett said Suskind has a "hyperactive imagination" and that his story was "not an accurate representation of this White House." White House spokesman Ari Fleischer added, "We laughed, and we dismissed the article. In fact, we're taking up a collection to buy the author a tape recorder." Even Card himself went on the offensive, telling MSNBC, "I viewed this story as more fiction than nonfiction." Yet neither Card nor the White House has cited a single specific instance where Card was misquoted. Asked point-blank by FOX's Tony Snow, "Did you say it?" Card was ridiculously evasive: "You know, if you start playing that game, Tony—you know, 'Is the sky up or down or around or through?' No, my job is to make sure the White House works well for the president." Similarly, on PBS's "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer," Card told Margaret Warner, "You shouldn't presume that all quotes that are in a magazine or a newspaper are accurate." But when Warner pressed Card on which quotes in the *Esquire* story were inaccurate, Card dodged again. "Well, if I were to go back and forth over every alleged quote in that article, it wouldn't be appropriate," Card said. "The important thing is the White House is working very well." And this week, when Card told *The New York Times* that "some [of the *Esquire* quotes] were taken out of context, some I said, and some I don't think I said," he again declined to detail which ones were which. Sadly, the White House's effort to impugn Suskind's story without actually contradicting anything in it seems to be working. Newspaper articles referring to Card's interview with Suskind often note, as *The New York Times* did, that Card "was quoted" as saying something in the *Esquire* piece, not merely that he "said" it. Even Warner, in her PBS interview with Card, read him quotes that "it's alleged you said." Since when did an undisputed quote become an allegation?

IMPERFECT UNION: In a recent letter to TNR regarding John B. Judis's article on the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (see "Dirty Deal," TNR, April 1 & 8), Teamster Communications Director Bret Caldwell wrote, "The William Hogan Jr.-Dane Passo case is still before the IRB [Independent Review Board], but that hasn't prevented Judis from playing judge and jury or from ascribing guilt." In fact, Judis didn't ascribe guilt. But now the IRB—established in 1989 to oversee the Teamster union—has. On May 30 the IRB banned Hogan and Passo—both close associates of Teamster President James P. Hoffa—from the union for life. It found that the two men had plotted with a Chicago company to replace Teamster workers in Las Vegas with low-wage nonunion workers. In short, the Hogan-Passo case is a textbook illustration of why the IRB is still needed to keep an eye on the Teamsters. Despite repeated warnings—Hoffa's own anti-corruption chief had warned him that the man with whom Hogan and Passo were negotiating was "involved with some crime figures in Chicago"—Hoffa kept both Hogan and Passo in high-level Teamster posts. According to Teamster members, Hogan even spoke on Hoffa's behalf at a union rally as recently as April 30. Hoffa, who desperately wants the Bush administration to recommend that the IRB be shut down, claims, "[W]e have come full circle and have cleaned up our union." Actually, coming full circle means you're back where you started, which in the case of the Teamsters is a very dirty place indeed. ■



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tallinn Dispatch

Vision Quest

By EUNY HONG-KORAL

WHAT HAS REALLY unified Europe over the past half-century, say some wags, is not the European Union, but the Eurovision Song Contest. Founded in 1956 by the European Broadcasting Union in an effort to build a broadcasting community in postwar Western Europe, the contest is now the longest continuously running TV program on the continent. It has expanded to include competitors from 24 nations; it is broadcast in virtually every country from the British Isles to the former Soviet Union; and this year it boasted 166 million viewers. Some of my German thirtysomething friends recently waxed nostalgic about growing up on Eurovision and suggested that the old Eurovision logo—a blue background with a white star burst—was the closest thing the continent had to a continental flag and the Eurovision theme song (the same as the "Masterpiece Theatre" theme song) the nearest substitute for a European anthem. "It used to give me chills to hear that theme [on television]," confided one of my pals, now a management consultant in Frankfurt. As Jan Feddersen explains in his German-language Eurovision fan book *Ein Lied Kann Eine Brücke Sein* ("a song can be a bridge"), "There was never a better 'discovery' than this [Eurovision] Fanfare. A sound as a promise: Europe could leave behind its quarreling and discord and be united."

Which is why Estonia, the host of this year's contest, pulled out all the stops. If Eurovision is as potent a symbol of Europeanness as the European Union, the hosts reasoned, surely they could use the competition as a gateway to membership in the European Union—which will rule on many of the former Soviet bloc countries' applications for membership next year. Estonia, which by virtue of winning last year became the first former Eastern bloc nation to host the contest, spent around $7 million on excessive stage lighting, "Solid Gold"-style dance programs, "Josie and the Pussycats"-esque tiered, circular dance platforms, and other gimmicks—making Eurovision by far the priciest event in Estonian history.

Eurovision, the Estonian government believes, has the potential to dramatically raise its country's profile among the people whose governments will determine EU admission. As former foreign minister Toomas Ilves notes, "People used to just stare blankly when I said I was from Estonia. But recently I and a number of my [Estonian government] colleagues have had the experience on official visits that people in places like Germany greet us very warmly and say, 'Oh, Estonia! You won at Eurovision.'" Other former Communist governments feel the same way. Macedonia, Slovenia, and Estonia are paying for the costumes, travel expenses, and excessive entourages of their Eurovision representatives. And in February, Slovenia was briefly wracked by controversy after Sestre ("The Sisters," in English), a band composed of three transvestites, won the Slovenian jury and, arguably, audience votes (a bitter dispute lingers) to represent the nation at Eurovision. Some conservative members of the Slovenian parliament were outraged. Panicked at the prospect of jeopardizing the nation's EU hopes, Slovenia's member TV station, which sponsored the delegation, defied parliament and sent Sestre to Tallinn anyway—complete with airline-stewardess costumes studded with "150,000 [red] Swarovski cut crystals." (They finished fourteenth out of 24 competitors.) For their part, Lithuania and Estonia, which are applying with their Baltic neighbor Latvia to enter the European Union, each awarded the maximum twelve points to Latvia's Marie N, handing her a victory for the salsa-beat song "I Wanna" and giving Riga the chance to prove its EU bona fides when it hosts the contest next spring.

And Eurovision doesn't only help sell countries like Estonia and Latvia to the European Union; it helps sell the European Union to Estonians and Latvians. At the beginning of 2001, polls indicated that only 46 percent of the Estonian population favored joining the European Union. According to Prime Minister Siim Kallas, Estonians viewed the European Union negatively, largely because of their fear of EU regulations. (EU rules governing restaurant sanitation, for instance, enforced by the Tallinn government in preparation for admission, may likely put some Estonian restaurants out of business because they can't afford to renovate.) But after Estonia won the Eurovision Song Contest in May 2001, that figure rose to 54 percent by August. As Kallas puts it, "Suddenly Estonia could enjoy a side of Europe that was positive, a victory in a song contest." And with a referendum on EU admission due in Estonia sometime next year, the government in Tallinn clearly hopes that this year's event sends those poll numbers higher still.

TO BE SURE, if Eurovision reflects European unity, it reflects European disunity as well. This year Austria, which bears a long-standing grudge against its Teutonic neighbor to the north, awarded Germany a mere one-point score; in turn, Germany gave its former annex zero. Greece and Turkey gave each other goose eggs—an annual tradition. Audience members, many carrying national flags and wearing T-shirts and face paint to match, sang impromptu nationalist tunes to football fight songs (e.g., "The Cup of Life," "Latvia! Latvia!"). During Estonia's performance of its entry, "Runaway," some audience members started singing the lyrics of the 1996 R. Kelly single "I Believe I Can Fly" to demonstrate the shameless similarity between the two tunes. Even nonparticipating countries were not spared. Norway, which holds the distinction of having received zero points in four separate contests and was therefore denied entry this year, was singled out for abuse. During a nontelevised dress rehearsal, the Estonian hosts sarcastically announced Norway as this year's winner. "See you in Oslo," they chuckled.

Enthusiasm for European unity is also undermined by

EUNY HONG-KORAL is a journalist in Frankfurt, Germany.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

School Choice: A Civil Rights Issue

Paul E. Peterson is **lirector of the Program** **n Education Policy and** **Governance, Harvard** **niversity; senior fellow,** **loover Institution; and** **nember, Hoover's Koret** **Task Force on K–12** **Education.**

Villiam G. Howell is an **assistant professor of** **olitical science at the** **iversity of Wisconsin at** **Madison.**

Just as the Supreme Court prepares to rule on the constitutionality of school vouchers, President Bush has set aside in his budget proposals $50 million for trial school choice programs. Bush has called for giving parents "expanded school choice options, including the option of a private school." It's the civil rights issue of our time! he might have added.

Bush refers to "expanding" school choice with good reason. For decades Americans have had school choice—provided they've got the money to pick their place of residence. And for decades the education gap between blacks and whites has remained intact, despite a host of compensatory education reforms. Nor—and here is the civil rights issue—is this gap likely to close if most whites have residential choice and most blacks do not.

African Americans are the losers in this arrangement. Holding less equity and facing discrimination in the housing market, blacks choose from a limited set of housing options. As a consequence, their children attend the worst public schools. The results are clear. **Despite the efforts of the civil rights movement, public schools today remain just as segregated as they were in the 1950s.**

Since blacks have the least amount of choice among public schools, they benefit the most when choice is expanded. In multiyear evaluations of private voucher programs in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Dayton, Ohio, we and our colleagues found that African American students, when given the choice of a private school, scored significantly higher on standardized tests than comparable students remaining in public school.

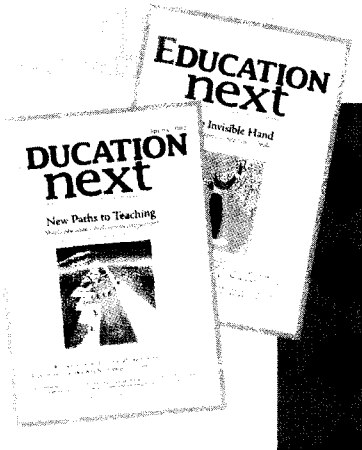
These test score gains were accomplished at religious and other private schools that had little more than half the funds available to their public school counterparts. Nevertheless, parents reported much higher levels of school satisfaction. Private school parents were more likely to report that their children were in smaller schools, smaller classes, and an educational-friendly environment. Their children had more homework, and the schools were more likely to communicate with the family. Nor were the private schools any more segregated than the public ones.

So what should Congress do with the Bush administration proposal? Assuming the Supreme Court finds vouchers constitutional, Congress should put bipartisan bickering aside and launch a demonstration program that can fully explore the potential of choice programs. Demonstration programs should be initiated in one or more cities where African American students are concentrated in sizable numbers and private schools are not being fully utilized. Congress should make sure voucher programs receive monies comparable to what public schools receive. In this way, founders of new schools, both secular and religious, will be motivated to participate in the demonstration and bring new ideas and new energy into urban education. All the schools should be held accountable for results within a reasonable period of time.

In short, it's time to take the American commitment to equal educational opportunity seriously. Precisely because African Americans suffer most in today's real estate–driven system of school choice, they stand to benefit the most from school vouchers.

— Paul E. Peterson and William G. Howell

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



Interested in cutting-edge ideas about K-12 education?

Subscribe to ***Education Next: A Journal of Opinion and Research.***
Visit us on-line at **www.educationnext.org** or contact us to receive a complimentary copy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fears that pan-European trends will drown out national culture. From 1976 to 1998, Eurovision rules required competitors to sing in their native tongues. That rule was repealed in 1999, in large part because it was believed to give an unfair advantage to English- and French-speaking nations, whose songs were understood by a broader audience. As a result of the rule change, of the 24 entries this year, all but five were performed wholly or partly in English. The Macedonian and Bosnian entrants, who sang for the most part in their national languages, said the original rule should be reinstated. Marie N made a similar assertion the day after her victory, even though she had sung her winning song in English. And this spring a Dutch foundation called Liet International held a countercontest for minority languages, including Catalan, Basque, and Occitan, because they felt English-heavy Eurovision "hardly represent[s] the European diversity."

For Estonia and other former Eastern bloc governments, however, the benefits of EU accession clearly outweigh the dangers of cultural assimilation. "The EU is very good at preserving minority cultures and languages," Signe Kivi, Estonia's minister of culture, told me. Besides, says Prime Minister Kallas, there's another benefit to EU membership: "EU accession is crucial to assuring Estonia's final [spiritual and mental] break from the Soviet Union." A good thing, too, given the comment of a Russian delegate at a pre-contest press conference: "We ask you to [appreciate] that we were until recently the leading culture of the world." In other words, $7 million Estonian dollars well spent. ■

Are swing voters a myth?

Group Think

By JONATHAN CHAIT

ONE DAY LAST month Democratic pollster Mark Penn unveiled the new swing voters whose allegiance will shape American politics this November and beyond: "office park dads." Immediately a demographic star was born. "Politically pampered 'soccer moms' are being elbowed aside," began a story in *USA Today*. "Democrats are going after the votes of 'office park dads.'" How can the party win over this crucial swing vote? Easy, explains Penn: These voters "don't want the party to adopt an anti-corporate stance."

Office park dads are only Penn's latest creation. A mere two years ago he declared the election would be decided by another group: "wired workers." They, too, elicited much media fanfare. "Pollsters have discovered a class of tech-savvy suburban voters who could turn the election," declared *Newsweek*. Eerily enough, wired workers, like their successors, also craved a business-friendly Democratic Party. "Class rhetoric is a huge turnoff for this group," said Penn at the time. Eerier still, it turns out both classes of swing voters embrace the very political philosophy Penn was urging Democrats to adopt long before he discovered either group.

Though much imitated, Penn is the unacknowledged master of this particular form of ideological-demographic bait and switch. In contemporary American politics the preferences of swing voters take on great importance, whereas the preferences of reliably partisan groups are often consigned to the sidelines. The trick, therefore, is to find some segment of the electorate whose philosophy jibes with your own, and then define it as the swing vote.

Take a recent poll conducted by pollster Sergio Bendixen purporting to show that President George W. Bush has made startling inroads among Hispanics. The media lapped up the conclusion—"BUSH OUTREACH TO HISPANICS PAYS DIVIDENDS FOR PRESIDENT," proclaimed *The Wall Street Journal* on May 21. Hispanics now constituted a swing group, explained Bendixen and Cuban-American Democratic Representative Robert Menendez. "The poll tells us, 'Wake up. You're being challenged,'" warned Menendez. What was the evidence for this conclusion? Asked how they would vote in a potential Bush-Gore rematch, Latinos opted for Al Gore by merely two percentage points, down from a 27-point margin in 2000. What the poll didn't mention is that, among the public as a whole, Bush leads in a potential rematch by around 25 points. Moreover, Bendixen's own survey showed that Hispanics intended to vote Democratic in November's congressional races by a 30-point margin. In other words, the real news was that Hispanic voters *still* skew Democratic by about 30 percentage points more than American voters as a whole. But it would hardly suit Bendixen's interests to tell Democrats they're doing relatively well with Hispanics and could more profitably direct their energies elsewhere.

NOWHERE HAS THE manufacture of swing voters been more evident than in the intramural argument over the future of the Democratic Party. Both Republicans and Democrats perennially debate the relative merits of placating the party base versus reaching out to the center. What distinguishes Democrats is that they can't even agree on what the center is. "The debate over who the swing voters are," observes GOP pollster Whit Ayres, "is more of a Democratic argument than a Republican argument." And unsurprisingly, within the party each side's demographic analysis corresponds neatly with its ideological agenda. The Democrats' moderate faction, associated with Penn and the Democratic Leadership Council, defines swing voters as white-collar professionals who are economically moderate and socially liberal. The liberal faction, by contrast, defines the swing vote as blue-collar, downscale voters who are economically populist and socially moderate. Every political season, each side vies to develop a narrow demographic slice—preferably attached to a catchy name—that the media will adopt as "the" swing vote. And so in recent years the political landscape has become populated with office park dads, waitress moms, wired workers, and other exotic species.

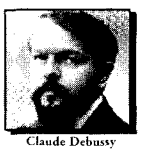
The most successful recent swing group, soccer moms, emerged seemingly out of nowhere six years ago; Penn, then President Bill Clinton's chief pollster, glommed onto them as the perfect target for his New Democrat agenda. In 2000

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How to Listen to and Understand Great Music

***AT LAST...*48 brilliant recorded lectures that let you comprehend and enjoy great music more fully than ever before!**

Arnold Schönberg

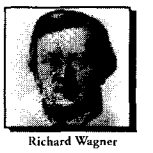

Claude Debussy

Giuseppe Verdi

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Johann Sebastian Bach
Planet Art.

Ludwig van Beethoven


Richard Wagner

Hector Berlioz

Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

Have you ever listened to a favorite piece of music and wanted to know more about it? Have you wondered what it would be like to truly *hear* music in the way the composer intended? Have you ever felt confused by musical forms, wondering what exactly distinguishes a symphony from a concerto, a minuet from a rondo?

Then you owe it to yourself to try **How to Listen to and Understand Great Music**, a 48-lecture course taught by Professor Robert Greenberg of the San Francisco Conservatory.

His engaging, and informative lectures will soon have you hearing and enjoying music not just with your ears, but with your *mind!*

A Very Special Offer

And now, for a limited time only, you can get all 48 lectures for a special price of just $94.95 on audio tape, $139.95 on videotape, or $129.95 on compact disc, *a savings of up to $410 off list!*

This offer is being made to introduce you to The Teaching Company, the renowned educational enterprise which records America's best college teachers for its Great Courses series.

You can learn at home, on the highway, or even while you exercise, revisiting the subjects you loved best at school or taking on new ones.

With Dr. Greenberg's help, you'll come to understand the social, political, religious, and aesthetic dynamics that made up the world of Europe's great composers, and what those composers had to say about it—much as literature students study Shakespeare's England to more fully understand his works. In effect, then, the music itself becomes a "universal, non-verbal language" opening a unique window on the world in which the composer actually lived.

Dr. Greenberg presupposes no special knowledge, and provides a solid introduction to basic musical terms and elements.

He demonstrates each musical point either with his own piano rendition or with digitally recorded excerpts. Also, he conveys his vast knowledge not only with puckish wit and contagious passion, but in *plain English.*

Come walk with the giants of music history. Come hear and understand great music with a depth of understanding and enjoyment you never thought possible before and do it all with no risk—Your *complete satisfaction* is guaranteed.

A vast canvas of 10 centuries of Western concert music...illuminated in 48 witty, engaging lectures

Part I: The Ancient World Through the Early Baroque *(Lectures 1-8)*

Part II: The High Baroque *(Lectures 9-16)*

Part III: The Classical Era I *(Lectures 17-24)*

Part IV: The Classical Era II & the Age of Revolution—Beethoven *(Lectures 25-32)*

Part V: Nineteenth-Century Romanticism *(Lectures 33-40)*

Part VI: From Romanticism to Modernism—1848 to 1913 *(Lectures 41-48)*

"Bob Greenberg's presentations on music are brilliant performances. The content, delivery and style combine the highest scholarship with ingenious metaphors and perfectly timed, and often irreverent, humor that results in an illuminating and thoroughly enjoyable experience for everyone from the expert."

—Ruth Felt, Founder and Director, San Francisco Performances

SAVE UP TO $410!
OFFER GOOD UNTIL JULY 24, 2002

No-Risk Money-Back Guarantee!

About Your Professor:

ROBERT GREENBERG (Ph.D., UC-Berkeley, 1984) chairs the Department of Music History and Literature at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. A popular lecturer whose work has been reported in the *Wall Street Journal* and other media outlets, he is the creator of the San Francisco Symphony's "Discovery Series." He speaks frequently to both lay and academic audiences across North America and Europe, and is an award-winning composer with more than 40 works to his credit.

Shop securely on-line at:
www.teach12.com

To order, mail coupon below or call our toll-free number: (Please refer to Priority Code 13124)

1-800-TEACH-12 (1-800-832-2412) Fax: 703-378-3819

The Teaching Company
4151 Lafayette Center Drive, Suite 100
Chantilly, VA 20151-1232
www.teach12.com

Priority Code 13124

Please send me the six-part **How to Listen to and Understand Great Music**, which consists of 48 forty-five minute lectures, with complete lecture outlines.

- ☐ **Audio $94.95** (reg. price $349.95) **SAVE $255!** plus $20 shipping, handling, and guarantee.
- ☐ **Video $139.95** (reg. price $549.95) **SAVE $410!** plus $20 shipping, handling, and guarantee.
- ☐ **CD $129.95** (reg. price $499.95) **SAVE $370!** plus $20 shipping, handling, and guarantee.
- ☐ **Check or Money Order enclosed**

**Additional international shipping charges may apply*
***Virginia residents please add 4.5% sales tax.*

☐ **Charge my:** *(please check desired format)*

☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ American Express

Account Number

Signature Exp. Date

Name (please print)

Mailing Address

City/State/Zip

Phone *(if we have questions regarding your order)*

☐ **FREE CATALOG.** Please send me a free copy of your current catalog (no purchase necessary).

Offer Good Through: July 24, 2002

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Penn rolled out wired workers before moving on to office park dads this spring. At first glance it might seem strange that, with each election cycle, control of the American polity shifts to a new demographic subgroup that just happens to share Penn's ideology. In fact, it's not clear that his subgroups are really distinct at all.

Start with office park dads. Penn's presentation describes them as middle-class, nonunion men ages 25 to 50, with working wives. (By this definition, I would qualify as an office park dad, despite the fact that I neither work at an office park nor am a dad.) Presumably many office park dads are also wired workers (whom Penn defined as male, tech-savvy office park dwellers), and many of their wives are soccer moms (defined as suburban working women). To a significant degree, then, these terms all describe the same broad demographic group: middle- and upper-middle-class, suburban professionals.

Still, the press has accepted uncritically Penn's assertion that office park dads represent "the next electoral target group in the post-soccer-mom era." (Have the soccer moms died off or moved to Canada en masse?) Penn's constant ginning up of new groups, and consigning of old ones to the trash heap of history, conveniently dovetails with journalists' desire to find fresh, world-remaking trends every election season. Indeed, the breathless accounts of new swing voters make American politics sound like a hyperspeed Marxist dialectic, with new classes of swing voters arising every two years to overthrow their predecessors. If these classes are basically interchangeable—if office park dads and their soccer mom wives share the same political views—then this succession is an illusion. And even if it isn't—if, by virtue of their gender, office park dads really do constitute a new swing group whose views differ from those of their soccer mom predecessors—it's still by no means clear why Democrats should switch course and start courting them. Wouldn't that just cause soccer moms—who are presumably as numerous as ever—to defect?

For their part, liberal Democrats argue that office park dads aren't swing voters at all, pointing to the fact that according to Penn's own research, they prefer the GOP by a margin of 25 percentage points. "Why would you target a group that's 2-1 against you and also doesn't want your issues? Why don't we go after blue-collar men?" pollster Celinda Lake asked *USA Today*. Of course Lake, like Penn, doesn't limit herself to one gender in her efforts to target Democratic appeals toward a specific economic bloc. For the last two election cycles, in fact, she has been touting "waitress moms" as the *real* swing group upon whom Democrats should focus. "Waitress moms are back in charge of the election," she declared in September 2000.

THE REAL PROBLEM isn't that Penn is targeting the wrong swing voters and Lake the right ones (or vice versa). It's that both of them conceive of the swing vote as a unified bloc. In fact, one consequence of the political parity currently prevailing in the country is that the number of potential swing voters has grown in recent years to the point where, argues Ayres, "you're easily looking at over half the population defined as swing voters. You can define swing voters any way you want." A group of voters may be targeted because they constitute a swing vote; but just as often they *become* a swing vote *because* they are targeted. Coal miners in West Virginia, for example, only became a swing vote in 2000 after Bush decided to court them aggressively. If all goes according to the White House plan, steelworkers in Ohio will respond the same way to the president's recent tariffs decision.

Which is why arguments over who constitutes the swing vote are ultimately so pointless. "It all comes down to what your vision of the party is," says one Democratic strategist. Centrist Democrats such as Penn no doubt genuinely believe that eschewing economic populism in favor of pro-market centrism is the right thing to do; liberal Dems like Lake believe the reverse. So they look for segments of the population that agree with them and dub them swing voters—essentially recruiting millions of proxies to make their cases for them. In recent years blue-collar workers have grown more Republican, upscale suburbanites more Democratic. Should Democrats try to win back the voters who have left them or try to win more of the voters who are coming their way? There are many ways to answer that question, but none of them can be found in a poll. ■

Can the bishops reform themselves?

Service Station

By MICHAEL SEAN WINTERS

LAST WEEK IN Dallas the Catholic bishops of the United States adopted a "one strike, you're out" policy that will remove from active ministry any priest who has sexually abused a minor, whether that abuse occurred 40 years ago or occurs tomorrow. It was a bold and important step, and it has brought the bishops considerable grief. Many in the press have slammed them for not going further and automatically "defrocking" abusive priests. But this is theological illiteracy posing as moral absolutism. It is a cornerstone of Catholic theology that the ordination of a man changes him ontologically—once a priest, always a priest. The ordination of a priest is a sacrament, and in a sacrament we believe God is the primary actor. God baptizes a child, ordains a man, marries a couple. Therefore defrocking is a complicated and cumbersome process, which never strips the priest absolutely of certain powers, like absolving sins or confecting the Eucharist. The policy adopted in Dallas upholds this theology while ensuring that by removing pedophile priests from active ministry—that is, from direct contact with the laity—no priest gets a second chance to abuse a child. In fact, it may do more to protect children than defrocking would: Rather than letting an abuser loose in society, the bishops' new policy

MICHAEL SEAN WINTERS, who lives in Washington, D.C., writes frequently on Catholic issues.

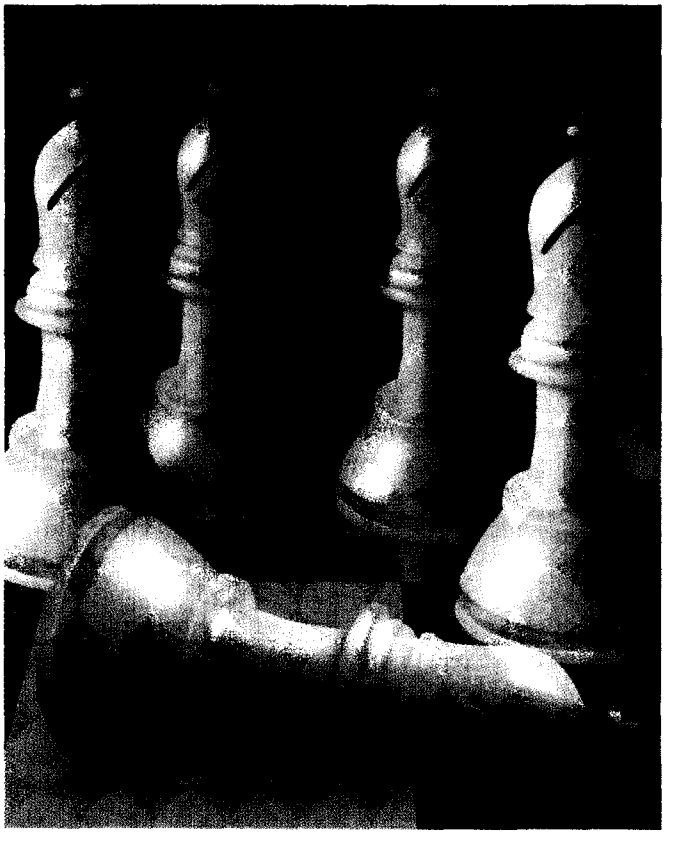
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

will keep him in a monastery repenting his sin and praying for the salvation of all.

The problem in Dallas was not the bishops' treatment of priests; it was their treatment of themselves. It is obvious to the average Catholic why a priest who is psychosexually ill can never be permitted to serve as a priest again. But by the same logic, why should the bishops who protected the pedophiles be permitted to continue in their offices? We can forgive Bernard Cardinal Law, as we can forgive John Geoghan; this was never a crisis about God's mercy. But just as we do not want John Geoghan near children, we are not sure we want Cardinal Law near power. The president of the conference, Bishop Wilton Gregory, pointed the way in his opening speech in Dallas: "We [bishops] are the ones who worried more about the possibility of scandal than in bringing about the kind of openness that helps prevent abuse.... We ask your forgiveness." With those words Bishop Gregory showed that finally someone in authority "gets it."

But they are still only beginning. The bishops must rethink the manner in which they govern the Church. And that means they must radically revive the hierarchical philosophy on which Catholicism is based: that ministry and authority in the Church are always seen theologically as service. To govern the local church is to serve the local church. Every Holy Thursday, Catholics remind themselves of this when the priest or bishop washes the feet of twelve parishioners, recalling Jesus' washing the feet of the twelve apostles. In the Church's conception of hierarchy, authority goes up the ladder in consequence of the service and love coming down.

Too often, however, the theological idea of hierarchic service has been inverted. One hundred years ago the future Pope Pius X wrote: "When we speak of the Vicar of Christ [the Pope], we must not quibble, we must obey: we must not ... evaluate his judgments, criticize his directions, lest we do injury...." This is not obedience; it is slavishness. A lot has changed within the Catholic Church since 1902. The Mass is no longer in Latin; parishes have altar girls; the concept of separation of church and state is no longer condemned as a heresy. And it's true that in Dallas many of the bishops' decisions furthered a culture of openness: Pedophilia settlements will not be kept secret unless the victim requests it; a national review board will compile data from each diocese to verify compliance with the "one strike, you're out" policy; information about abuse will be turned over to civil authorities immediately. All these steps will help change the culture of the hierarchy. But not enough. Clearly some bishops believe they are accountable to no one but the Pope. And, under canon law, the Bishops' Conference has no juridical authority to police its own members beyond common shame, which evidently does not work. Nor do local synods function to chastise errant bishops. Throughout the nineteenth century the bishops and priests of a region played a central role in selecting new bishops, and there was a resulting sense of collegial responsibility; today Vatican-appointed diplomats propose the names from which the Pope selects new bishops.



DENNIS NISHI

So what must the bishops do? For starters, they can listen to their laity, who are devoted to the Church but devoted also to change. Clearly in 2002 most Catholics in the United States love our Pope, even when we disagree with him. We are not following in the footsteps of the Synod of Pistoia, which in late-eighteenth-century Italy expressed its frustrations by refusing to acknowledge papal authority and insisting on appointing its own bishops. So rather than viewing their parishioners as potential schismatics corrupted by a Protestant societal ethos, the bishops should listen to American Catholicism's moderate voices for change—like Voice of the Faithful, a lay reform group that has emerged in Boston and elsewhere and has been advocating sensible changes in the Church. There is no theological reason why bishops must control the finances of a diocese or why lay people cannot play a greater role in selecting pastors and reviewing the bishops' decisions.

The bishops must also acknowledge that for some of their number, leadership is no longer an option. The depositions in Boston continue: Whatever good Cardinal Law has done in the past—and Law has done great good in the past—his legacy now is the sight of his protégés entering courtrooms. In New York, Cardinal Edward Egan may have escaped criminal charges for allegedly failing, as bishop of Bridgeport, Connecticut, to meet the state's mandatory reporting requirements on sexual abuse of minors; but the moral stain perdures. Sooner or later, gracefully or pitifully, both men must go. On the other hand, Bishop Gregory has emerged as a man of moral clarity and decisive leadership. Give that man a red hat.

Lastly, the bishops must literally preach their way out of this crisis. They must preach about mercy from within the crisis, not as if it had not happened or as if the blame lay with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

others. They must demonstrate why we should again consider them spiritual guides and leaders. Compare Bishop Gregory's forthright apology quoted above to that of Cardinal Egan's "apology" in April: "If in hindsight we also discover that mistakes may have been made as regards prompt removal of priests and assistance to victims, I am deeply sorry." Which man had recently consulted his lawyer, and which man had recently consulted his Bible?

In that Bible, one finds the parable of the prodigal son. It is a most difficult parable for many preachers, and I remember the awkwardness my Sunday school teacher had in explaining it to me when I was eleven years old. It seems unfair: We are told to be good, and we strive to be good, and then the slacker turns around and gets the fatted calf and the fancy coat. We do not want to believe that God's mercy counts for more than our efforts to be good. The parable is especially offensive if one is a 70-year-old bishop who has climbed his way to an office of prominence and authority through hard work and sacrifice. But this is precisely what Christians are called to believe. It is why pride, not lust, is the deadliest of the seven deadly sins. It is why the Church needs leaders who are not "holier than thou" but who are as human as the rest of us. It is why, if the bishops reach deep, this moment could become a great moment in the history of Catholicism, a time when we again learn to preach the outrageous proposition that God's mercy outruns God's justice.

"A man had two sons...." There are no four words that have greater resonance in a Christian's soul than these, and none is more needed by the Catholic Church in the United States at this moment. We Catholics love our bishops; or, better to say, we want to love them again. In declining to resign, Cardinal Law said that as a bishop he is the father of the family and that a father does not abandon the family when times get tough. He misunderstands. Today Cardinal Law and his brother bishops are in the place of the prodigal son. But, of course, the prodigal turned around. ■

Bush, pollution, and hysteria.

Air Condition

By Gregg Easterbrook

For more than one year now, the media and environmentalists have been predicting that President George W. Bush would relax portions of the Clean Air Act. And last week he appeared to do just that, announcing a fresh interpretation of the infamously confusing "new source review" (NSR) pollution rule that mainly governs old, coal-fired power plants in the Ohio Valley. Reaction could be characterized as unfavorable. "The most dramatic rollback of the Clean Air Act in history," "CBS News" quoted critics as pronouncing. "Once again, clean air takes a backseat to the polluters and the special interests," said Senator Tom Daschle. "This is a fundamental gutting of the Clean Air Act," fumed everyone's man of the hour, New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer. The decision, opined Rebecca Stanfield of the U.S. Public Interest Research Group, means "thousands of premature deaths per year that could have been prevented." Added New Jersey Senator Robert Torricelli, "People's lives will be lost because of what was decided today.... Lakes will be destroyed. Forests will be destroyed."

In truth Bush's NSR decision is of minor importance. It does little more than reduce the red tape associated with installing new equipment in power plants. Pollution is unlikely to increase as a result; there's at least as good a chance the Bush NSR ruling will cause air emissions to *drop*. Beyond that, NSR, which the press has depicted as a centerpiece of pollution control, is actually one of the Clean Air Act's less-important programs, impacting only a small percentage of total emissions. Beyond that, the supposed regulatory nightmare of NSR, which business repeatedly denounces as bureaucracy gone mad, isn't nearly as bad as industry claims. Beyond even that, other anti-pollution proposals promise a far greater pollution reduction than even the environmentalists' preferred interpretation of NSR—yet these better ideas are being brushed aside as the left and right smash each other over a bunch of old Midwest power plants.

In other words, environmentalists and some Democrats are drastically, perhaps even deceitfully, exaggerating NSR's benefit while industry lobbyists and some Republicans are drastically, perhaps even deceitfully, exaggerating its harm. It's a case study in how, in contemporary Washington, the media, lobbyists, enviros, and both parties bring out the worst in each other.

Oxymoronically, NSR applies mainly to old sources. The Clean Air Act amendments of 1977 imposed strict standards on new power plants, refineries, and other industrial sites. But existing facilities won a grandfather clause that exempted coal-fired generating stations in the Midwest and a few other industrial operations from complying with the standards. The rationalization was that these old power plants would shut down soon anyway. A backstop provision stated that any grandfathered facility that did not shut down, and instead modernized or expanded, would be treated as if it were a new source—hence the rule's perplexing name—triggering NSR to impose advanced pollution-control requirements.

Unfortunately, both the grandfather clause and the NSR rule boomeranged. Because the grandfathered plants essentially had permission to continue emitting levels of pollution that new facilities could not, utilities had no incentive to replace them with new power plants, which would be much cleaner and more energy efficient but would require a substantial capital investment in pollution controls. (Modern pollution-abatement systems are extremely effective but add about 20 percent to the capital cost of a coal-power project.) Midwest utilities also had little incentive to add modern pollution-control equipment onto the old plants because (to simplify mildly) almost any change in a plant might invoke NSR. So the old generating stations stayed open and stayed dirty; today 51 of them, nearly all in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Midwest, emit a little less than one-third of all power plant air pollution, although they represent only about 11 percent of fossil-fueled electricity generation. NSR itself evolved into one of the most unwieldy, top-heavy federal regulatory programs, freighted by thousands of pages of proceedings on what the word "maintenance" means.

The big air-pollution-control success stories—tailpipe restrictions on automobiles (begun in 1970 and tightened several times since) and the 1990 acid rain "trading" program, both of which have produced spectacular pollution reductions at a comparatively low cost—are fairly simple programs in which the government imposes a cutback and industry figures out how to comply. NSR, by contrast, is a command-and-control program, requiring regulators to pore over individual engineering diagrams on a case-by-case basis. The result, not surprisingly, has been high process costs, slow results, unintended consequences, and reams of litigation. And so in 1996 the Bill Clinton administration began an initiative to simplify NSR—an initiative of which, in some ways, Bush's announcement is simply the end product.

VARIOUS FACTORS HAVE coalesced to make NSR a hot-button issue. One is industry's attempt to evade it, which has rightly aroused the ire of politicians and enviros—NSR may be an unwise law, but it is the law nonetheless. Some utilities have defied NSR so brazenly that even Attorney General John Ashcroft earlier this year rejected the request by Dick Cheney's energy task force to end federal litigation against NSR evaders. The suit continues, helping keep NSR in the news.

A less-edifying reason that greens focus on NSR is that with virtually all forms of pollution (except greenhouse gases) in steady decline, there are ever-fewer issues to be outraged about or to raise money on the backs of. According to the latest *Index of Leading Environmental Indicators*—an analysis of Environmental Protection Agency data published annually by the Pacific Research Institute, a nonpartisan think tank—national ozone levels have declined nearly 30 percent since 1976; acid rain levels have declined 65 percent; nitrogen oxide (a factor in smog) levels have declined 38 percent; and, since 1988, "particulates" (airborne soot) have declined 26 percent. Cars, trucks, buses, factories, outboard engines, construction equipment—just about everything gets cleaner every year, except for old Midwest power plants.

This means the high-polluting anachronisms of the Ohio Valley are a real problem. But they're hardly the catastrophe that environmentalists and prominent Democrats suggest. Announcing his support for Ashcroft's decision, Spitzer said, "We hope that the Northeast will finally see improved air quality with reduced urban smog, acid rain, and respiratory disease." Yet the Northeast has been "seeing" progressively cleaner air for decades: The number of smog-alert days in New York City have declined dramatically since the early '90s, and the Big Apple was recently certified as in compliance with federal carbon monoxide ("winter smog") standards for the first time. The notion that Midwest power plants are causing a pollution disaster in the Northeast is sheer make-believe—but it serves Democratic "wedge issue" positioning, media potboiling, and enviro fund-raising.

And if pols and greens have falsely depicted NSR as an environmental crisis, industry has falsely depicted it as a regulatory one for much the same reason: It's getting harder and harder for the right to find environmental issues about which to become lathered. Though environmental policy could still become more user-friendly (especially through the introduction of market forces), over the past two decades most federal regulations have significantly reduced pollution without any harm to economic growth. The EPA, under William Reilly during Bush I, then under Carol Browner in the Clinton-Gore years, and now under Christie Todd Whitman, has worked assiduously to streamline rules and present a friendly face to business. For example, the 1990 rules that "reformulated" gasoline to reduce its pollution content were arrived at through amicable negotiation with industry, not through litigation or confrontation. Most of industry's genuine complaints about environmental rules are already resolved.

But just as environmental alarmists feel the fact that most environmental trends are positive is a disastrous secret that must be covered up at all costs, the anti-government crowd feels the fact that most environmental regulations are working and reasonably priced poses the same political danger. So the left speaks of the Midwest power plant problem as if it were representative of all industry, while the right speaks of NSR's regulatory overkill as if it were representative of all anti-pollution programs. Journalists buy into both forms of propaganda because they make for argument and anger, skipping the controversy-deflating complication that both the left and the right are wildly exaggerating the importance of NSR.

HOW ELSE TO explain the media's inattention to the statistics that puncture the NSR controversy? According to an analysis by the Clean Air Task Force, a respected environmental group, if the strictest interpretation of NSR were applied to the 51 dirtiest Midwest plants, acid rain emissions would decline by 2.8 million tons per year, while nitrogen oxide emissions would decline by one million tons. That sounds impressive, but weight totals for gases—what most air pollution is—can be deceptive. The figures equate to a 15 percent reduction in total acid rain emissions and a 4 percent cut in total nitrogen oxide emissions. Such reductions would be welcome but hardly decisive. (Acid rain emissions already declined, during the '90s, by almost twice as much as what the strictest interpretation of NSR would produce.)

The relatively small benefits of potentially cracking down on Midwest plants highlight the media make-believe of those who claim Bush's decision means "thousands of premature deaths per year that could have been prevented." Public health studies do show that power plant emissions contribute to premature deaths, mainly among the elderly, which is why new emission reductions are needed. But the big totals for premature deaths per year (researchers are currently debating the correct estimate) are the effects from all forms of air pollution, from all sources, not just the effects from the NSR-regulated pollutants in the dirty Midwest power plants. That's more likely to be in the range of a few

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hundred per year—important, yes, but in the low ranks of causes of death.

What about, "Lakes will be destroyed. Forests will be destroyed"? Improbable: Dramatic reductions in acid rain have already led to a comeback of Eastern woodlands. The *Brookings Review* recently noted, "Appalachian forests, expected to be wiped out by acid rain, are the healthiest they have been since before the industry era." Eastern lakes have shown a slower-than-expected rate of recovery from "acidification," but even there the trends are not negative, only slowly positive. Some have suggested that the White House plan would cause new peril to lakes and forests by creating "hot spots"—local areas where emissions went up even as overall pollution declines. But the EPA already has hot-spot programs, with the clunky names "nonattainment area" and "prevention of significant deterioration," which activate when there is a local pollution increase. These programs are not affected by Bush's NSR decision; if his action causes a hot spot, one of the other programs will come into force and compel the responsible power plants to stage extra cleanup. Hot-spot programs work: Maps comparing hot spots in 1994 versus 2000 show that nearly all are in decline.

Then there's, "Once again, clean air takes a backseat to the polluters...." But average people want the electricity generated by "the polluters," and just last year, during the California power crunch, members of both parties called for increases in generating capacity. Besides, clean air *doesn't* take a backseat under the Bush interpretation. What the White House proposed is to simplify NSR to allow plant managers to install modern, generally cleaner hardware without litigation. Bush has not granted Midwest power plants authority to increase emissions. Under his NSR, facilities would be restricted to an emissions rate that could not exceed the most they had emitted in any two-year period in the last decade. This suggests that the worst-case result of Bush's action will not be more pollution but merely a slower rate of pollution reduction. At the same time, by lifting the lawsuit threat Bush's rule increases the chance that Midwest utilities will spend their money on new, high-efficiency, low-emissions hardware, rather than on lawyers.

Meanwhile, as attention focuses on the Midwest power plant contretemps, the media, enviros, and Democrats continue to say amazingly little about the Bush "Clear Skies" pollution-reduction proposal unveiled last winter. Pundits, newscasts, and newspapers, which have hammered the administration again and again about the Midwest plants, have reported little or nothing about this pollution-reduction plan since it doesn't follow the doomsday script. When Clear Skies is referenced, the mention is always dismissive—for instance, *The New York Times* this week editorialized with outrage about NSR, then in passing brushed off Clear Skies because its details aren't final. The Bush Midwest-plant plan details aren't final, either.

The poorly named Clear Skies proposal would use the same types of simple rules that have an excellent track record on reducing acid rain and automobile emissions to bring about in the next decade new reductions of 6.5 million tons of acid rain emissions from generating stations and 2.9 tons of nitrogen oxide pollution—double the acid rain reduction that would occur under the strictest reading of NSR and triple the nitrogen oxide cut. To top it off, the proposal would also govern Midwest power plants, compelling them to join in the larger, national reduction effort even as they are released from NSR lawsuits.

Today, with almost all environmental trends positive and almost all environmental regulations good for society, precious little conforms to the left's and the right's preconceived notions of ecological doomsday versus regulatory nightmare. So both extremes fixate on NSR, a program that should have been put to bed years ago, and ignore a new pollution-reduction idea that promises to be simpler, cheaper, and more effective. Perhaps that's all we can expect from the Democratic Party's alarmist faction and the Republican Party's energy-industry shills. But couldn't the media, at least, depart from the script and focus on what serves the public interest? ■

Will the Democrats notice Howard Dean?

Invisible Man

By JONATHAN COHN

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

UH OH. I am standing in the doorway of a hotel banquet hall, searching the room for Howard Dean, the governor of Vermont and Democratic presidential hopeful. He's here to attend a local Greek Independence Day celebration—to give a few remarks, to march in a parade, and, perhaps, to make some political contacts that might help in the 2004 New Hampshire primary. It's an informal gathering, and when I called Dean's press secretary a few days ago, she suggested I just show up as the luncheon was winding down and pull him aside to chat. Which seemed like a perfectly reasonable proposition until a moment ago, when the plan's crucial flaw suddenly became apparent. *I have no idea what Howard Dean looks like.*

I'm not the only one. Though Dean is the nation's longest-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

serving Democratic governor, he is almost completely unknown—to the national press, to Democratic party insiders, even to fellow New Englanders like myself. Dean has spent the spring gabbing his way through Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina, and other key primary states. But except for a recent, well-publicized meeting with actor Martin Sheen, whose TV character on "The West Wing" is a New England governor-turned-president, good buzz has been tough to generate. Comics mock him: "Most people think he makes sausage," Comedy Central's Jon Stewart joked recently. And lately even some fellow Vermonters have been having fun at Dean's expense. When the governor recently accused some state legislators of "living in la-la land" for proposing untenable spending programs, an anonymous note circulated in the state Senate: "Howard Dean is running for president. Who's in la-la land?"

Luckily, back at the luncheon a strategy for recognizing Dean eventually presents itself. Most of the people who celebrate Greek Independence Day are, not surprisingly, Greek—or, at least, Greek-looking. In such a crowd, how hard can it be to spot a guy with a Yankee name like Howard Dean? Sure enough, within a few seconds I hone in on a tall, handsome man with close-cropped hair and nary a Mediterranean feature. When he notices me studying him, he motions to the thirtysomething assistant sitting nearby, who in turn comes to the door. "You must be Jonathan from THE NEW REPUBLIC," she smiles. "I'm Kate O'Connor, the governor's political director." Relieved, I follow her to the table, where the tall man extends his hand and begins mumbling something to me. Just as I am making a mental note of Dean's poor communication skills, I piece together the man's sentence: "I'm the governor's driver and security man."

WHEN O'CONNOR FINALLY introduces me to the real Howard Dean, he looks only somewhat like I imagined. He's not Greek-looking, but at five-foot-nine not exactly tall, either—which seems like just one more reason to be skeptical about his prospects. (Short candidates almost always lose presidential elections.) But once Dean starts talking, it's not so easy to dismiss him. Quite apart from his policy accomplishments, which include erasing Vermont's chronic budget deficits and enacting sweeping health care initiatives, Dean turns out to be a gifted communicator: passionate, intelligent, and brutally candid in an appealing sort of way. When pressed on an issue about which he's still forming an opinion, for example, he'll answer, "I'd give you my ten-point plan, but it's only got about six points right now." And rather than deny that he's an underdog, Dean argues that he can turn it to his advantage—by highlighting his status as the most authentic "outsider" in a Beltway-heavy field that includes senators, the House minority leader, and a former vice president. "People are tired of politicians talking out of every side of their mouths," Dean recently told a reporter from the *Rutland Herald and Times Argus*. "They want someone out there who can make a statement and stick to it—long shot or not." Of course, lots of candidates claim the "outsider" mantle, but Dean is temperamentally well-suited to it. Indeed, his penchant for blunt honesty has evoked more than one comparison to another politician who ran an outsider's campaign for president: John McCain.

The McCain analogy is useful in another way as well, because it demonstrates how Dean might succeed in 2004 even if he doesn't actually win the nomination. McCain, after all, lost his bid for the presidency. But he had a lasting impact all the same. By demonstrating the popularity of campaign finance reform, McCain forced George W. Bush to embrace the cause—a commitment Bush had to keep as president. It's possible to imagine Dean playing the same role for the Democrats in 2004. Unlike his better-known competitors, he has argued explicitly, even enthusiastically, for repealing part of the Bush tax cut. He has also placed universal health care, beginning with children, at the center of his nascent campaign. Although risky, these proposals could move the political debate back to the issue on which Bush is most vulnerable: His administration's decision to squander Clinton-era surpluses and sacrifice vital government programs in order to give wealthy Americans a tax break. All Dean must do is show that his ideas resonate with voters.

Alas, even this more modest goal may be out of reach. Dean has the personality and the message to pull off such an insurgency, but he may lack one other critical ingredient: time. Under the Democrats' new, shorter primary schedule, the nomination could be settled within a month, leaving an outsider like Dean with no time to introduce himself or his issues to the public. The rationale behind compressing the primary schedule was to strengthen the eventual nominee by sparing him a drawn-out political fight. But in so doing, party officials may have unwittingly undermined one of the primary system's key purposes: to serve as a laboratory of political thought, an opportunity for candidates to experiment with a variety of ideas and see which ones resonate. Particularly given their current stupor, the Democrats badly need this sort of debate. Dean could be the man to start it. But first he would need the chance.

LOOKING AT DEAN'S youth, it's easy to see where he got his political beliefs. Born in 1948, Dean was the oldest of four sons born to a wealthy stockbroker in the Hamptons. But while Dean seems to have inherited his father's stubbornly conservative beliefs about economics, his social attitudes reflect the liberal times in which he came of age. In 1967 Dean entered Yale, at roughly the same time as Bush—but the two approached the experience very differently. As Nicholas Lemann recalled in a 2000 *New Yorker* article, during the late '60s Yale was undergoing a radical transformation from an institution reserved for a white, wealthy elite to something closer to a meritocracy—a place that judged people on ability, not pedigree, and actively sought a diverse student body. Unlike Bush, who according to Lemann found these changes threatening, Dean, though very much a Yankee aristocrat himself, embraced the new Yale. Dean especially credits two black freshman-year roommates (from South Carolina and Tennessee, respectively) and a third, white roommate from rural Pennsylvania with opening his eyes to the experiences of minorities, Southerners, and the poor.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Campus politics in those days were dominated by the far left. But Dean was too much his father's son to get in bed with the radicals. "The truth is that the left always made me very suspicious because I instinctively distrust ideologues," Dean says. "I certainly did not support the war, but I was mistrustful of people like Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman and very mistrustful of SDS [Students for a Democratic Society]." (Dean says he showed up for his physical when his draft number came up but was rejected because of a congenital back defect that has bothered him his entire life.) Despite rooming with two black roommates, Dean avoided racial politics, too. As he tells it now, he preferred to show his commitment to civil rights not by staging protests but by volunteering as a tutor in New Haven's inner city. Perhaps this distaste for '60s-era radicalism explains why Dean, despite having majored in political science, eschewed career paths that might logically have lead to elected office. Indeed, he spent his first year after Yale "supporting my ski habit" by working in Colorado; then he returned to New York to try his hand at the family business—Wall Street.

But in the early '70s, after a few years on Wall Street, something changed Dean. And that "something" may have been the death of his younger brother, Charles. Unlike his big-brother Howard, Charlie Dean had long eyed a career in politics: At the University of North Carolina he'd worked for civil rights and coordinated a county campaign for George McGovern in 1972. After graduation Charlie and a college buddy embarked on a yearlong trot across the globe—which was going fine until they got to Laos, where a group of Communists accused them of spying for the United States and took them prisoner. The family tried desperately to get him out, but a year later came word that Charlie had been executed.

Dean doesn't talk much about the incident, but it was right around the time of Charlie's murder that he made a life change. Impressed by some friends who had become doctors, Dean started volunteering at the emergency room at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, took night courses at Columbia to satisfy his pre-med requirements, and eventually enrolled at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. After graduation the residency match system landed him in Vermont, where he married a woman he'd met in medical school—Judith Steinberg—and joined her in private practice.

IN MOST OTHER states that probably would have been the end of whatever political aspirations Dean harbored. But Vermont is uniquely suited to governing as a hobby. The state is tiny and nearly every elected official works part-time (governor being one of the exceptions). It's entirely possible to have a full-time job in Burlington while commuting to the state capital of Montpelier, just 40 miles away, for legislative meetings. And that's exactly what Dean did. In 1982 he ran for state legislature and won. In 1986 he ran for lieutenant governor and won again.

Then fate handed Dean's career a critical, if tragic, boost. On a late summer day in 1991 the assistant in Dean's medical office interrupted him while he was administering a routine physical. Montpelier was on the phone: Richard Snelling, the state's Republican governor, had died from a heart attack. Dean recalls finishing the exam before taking care of state business. "I just felt it would be really inconvenient to the patient to come back," Dean says, "and I knew it would be a long time before he could reschedule." Only afterward did he head to Montpelier for a hastily arranged swearing-in ceremony.

Many in Vermont figured this unanticipated promotion would mark the end of Dean's charmed political life. Unlike the popular Snelling, Dean was almost unknown. Vermont was also mired in the deep recession of the early '90s, setting the stage for some particularly bitter budget battles in the state legislature. In order to deal with mounting budget deficits, before his death Snelling had approved a temporary income tax increase slated to expire in 1993. Democrats wanted to extend the tax increase in order to finance additional social spending to help people weather the downturn; Republicans were vehemently opposed, arguing that a higher tax burden would stunt economic growth.

Most people assumed that Dean, a relatively reliable liberal during his years in the state legislature, would side with his party. He didn't. Instead, he sided with Republicans and let the tax increase lapse. Vermont had one of the nation's highest state income taxes, and Dean argued a reduction was essential to pulling the state out of recession—an argument conservatives remember and appreciate even today. "Never once has he succumbed to the temptation to jack up the income tax to screw the rich," says John McClaughry, a Republican who challenged Dean for governor in 1992 and now heads up a conservative think tank, the Ethan Allen Institute. "I wouldn't want to say he's a closet supply-sider, but at least he doesn't completely dismiss the impact of the marginal tax rate on economics, which many liberals do."

Of course, there was another way Dean could have increased state spending in the early '90s. He could have continued to run large deficits, which is just what some Democrats wanted. Again, though, Dean had none of it. He insisted on a balanced budget and has every year since, arguing that deficits are incompatible with responsible leadership. "He told them they'd never be successful as a party because the people did not trust them with their money," Vermont political analyst Peter Freyne told *The Christian Science Monitor* earlier this year. "He was right: He was the strict schoolteacher who taught the liberal Democrats in this state to be fiscal conservatives and to be proud of it." Dean's tight fiscal management is one reason that Vermont, despite its reputation for wild cultural liberalism, has in recent years earned a business-friendly reputation, which has contributed to the state's strong economy.

But if Dean battled state liberals over the ensuing years, particularly during budget season, he also gave them plenty of reasons to support him. As unwilling as Dean was to raise taxes, he cut them only once, in 1999, and then only moderately. In the late '90s, when the state suddenly had large surpluses on its hands, Dean opposed larger tax cuts and called instead for paying down debt and for onetime public-works expenditures. Over the years Dean won over environmentalists by passing laws restricting the development of open spaces; he impressed feminists by opposing occasional legislative efforts at restricting abortion. Most of all, even as he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

kept the state's finances sound, Dean doggedly directed what money the state did have to the cause closest to his heart—expanding access to quality health care.

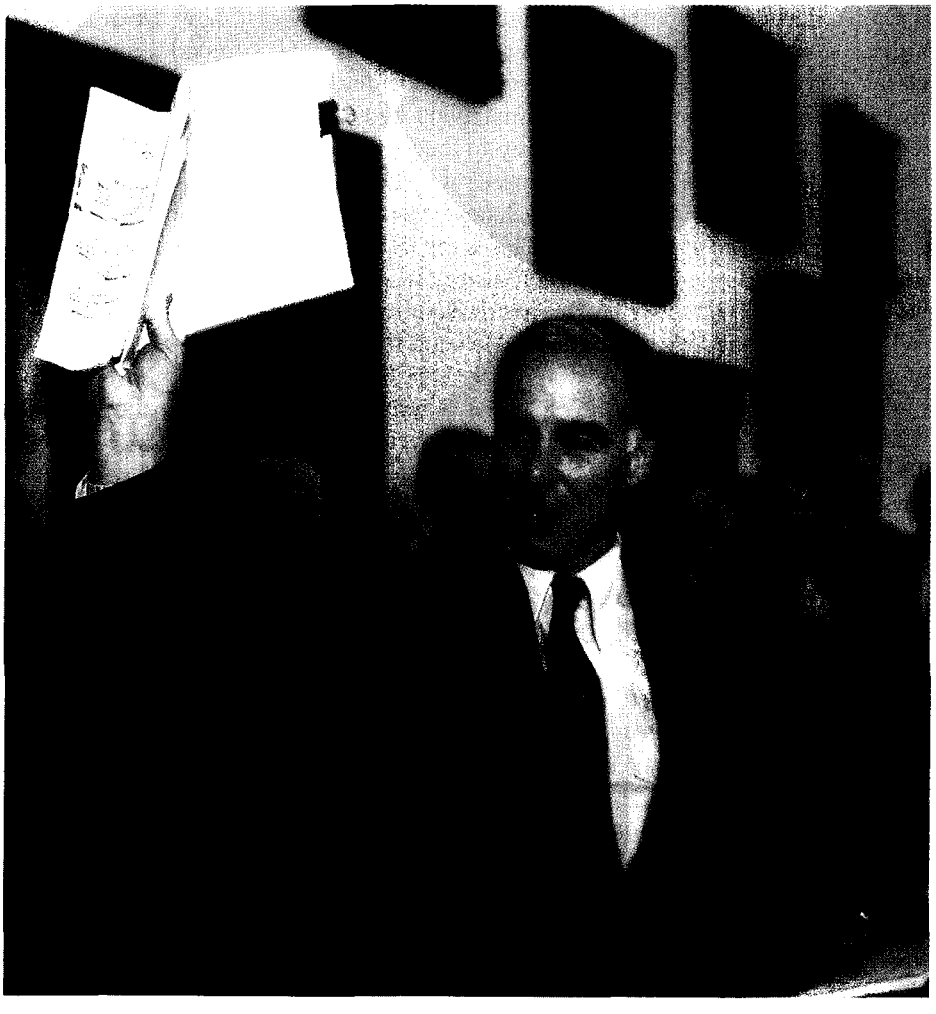
In his family practice, Dean says, he never turned away a patient for inability to pay. But he realized that even in Vermont, where an unusually large proportion of doctors seem to be similarly altruistic, people without insurance avoided going to the doctor except in emergencies, thereby missing out on the routine preventative care that might avert such emergencies in the first place. So almost immediately upon taking office, Dean began pushing for universal health insurance.

At the time, of course, the very same thing was happening in Washington, where Bill Clinton had just become president. Dean shuttled back and forth between Montpelier and Washington, working closely with the Clinton team and championing for Vermont a "managed competition" scheme similar to the one the administration was pushing for the country as a whole. But Dean's initial efforts would prove no more fruitful than the president's. In Vermont, the supporters of universal coverage were sharply divided between those who wanted the government to insure people directly and those, like Dean, who wanted private insurance companies to compete for business under an umbrella of state regulation. In the end, neither proposal got past the legislature; by the time the dream of universal health care had died in Congress, it was dead in Vermont, too.

Vermonters frequently invoke a medical analogy when describing Dean's political instincts: They say he knows when to give up on a dying patient and move on to the next one. So when the fight for universal health insurance in Vermont became futile, Dean set his sights on something more achievable—getting better health care for Vermont's children. Politically, it was a shrewd decision: Children are an inherently sympathetic group and their medical care is relatively inexpensive, consisting mostly of routine exams and vaccinations, rather than the expensive disease management and surgery adults require.

It was in the realm of children's insurance that Dean enacted the two initiatives that today represent his chief legacy. First, under a program Dean copied from Minnesota called Success by Six, Vermont began offering the mother of every newborn an at-home visit, from a local nonprofit or public agency, two weeks after the child's birth. Second, the state vastly expanded its Medicaid program for children (called "Dr. Dynasaur," to seem kid-friendly) so that all children in families with incomes below 300 percent of the poverty line—today, about $50,000 for a family of four—would be eligible for Medicaid coverage. The idea behind the expansion was to serve those families most likely to slip through the insurance safety net: people in low-wage jobs who didn't get insurance from their employers but made too much money to qualify for existing government subsidies.

Today nearly 90 percent of new mothers in Vermont accept the at-home visits—one reason, Dean says, that child abuse rates for children through age six have declined 50 percent. Dr. Dynasaur's results are more impressive still. According to the governor's office, just 4 percent of the state's children are without health insurance, among the lowest rates in the nation. The state's overall uninsured rate, 8 percent, is also among the nation's lowest—in part because Dr. Dynasaur allows adults in families with incomes below 150 percent of the poverty line to "buy into" Medicaid for a small fee. Even taking account of Vermont's small size and relatively low poverty rate, these are substantial achievements, and all the more so because Dean has remained committed to the programs despite rising medical costs and recent budget pressures. Indeed, even those Vermont Democrats who consider Dean too fiscally conservative concede that his devotion to Dr. Dynasaur is genuine and ironclad. "That was his vision, his persuasive capacity, his tenacity," says state Senator Nancy Chard, one of the



TOBY TALBOT, ASSOCIATED PRESS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

governor's regular sparring partners on the left. "It's an absolute given in this state that you do not in any way diminish or reduce what Dr. Dynasaur does. We as a state have accepted that obligation. That's Howard Dean. He deserves one hundred percent of the credit for that."

DEAN CONSIDERS HIS conservative fiscal record and his expansion of health care the hallmarks of his governorship. But the episode that has generated the most national interest concerns a fight he did not pick and that very nearly cost him his job: the debate over gay marriage.

In 1999 the Vermont Supreme Court unanimously ruled that gay couples deserved the same legal rights of marriage—shared employer benefits, inheritances, child custody, etc.—as heterosexual couples. It was, in effect, an ultimatum: If the legislature and governor didn't give gays marriage rights, the court would do so itself. Though none too thrilled about the court's aggressive meddling in the lawmaking process, Dean threw his support behind a compromise—allowing gays to enter into "civil unions" with all the rights of marriage but not the name. When, after a grueling and anguished debate, the legislature passed a civil-union bill in the summer of 2000, Dean signed it. But while Dean hailed the law as "a courageous and powerful statement about who we are in the state of Vermont," he pointedly refused to hold a public signing ceremony, arguing that it might further divide the state.

Even today some supporters of the bill accuse Dean of cowardice, complaining that he signed the measure "in the closet." Peter Shumlin, a Democratic state senator, disagrees. By his account, it was Dean who ultimately pushed reticent legislators to pass the bill: "We went up to the governor and said, 'We need to appoint some commission on how to deal with this court decision and come back next year and pass a bill then.' He looked at us and said, 'This is the right thing to do, and we happen to be at a place in history where we can make it happen. We're not going to run from our responsibility.' ... And he knew the consequences. He knew there would be political fallout, that people would lose their jobs over it; but he knew it was the right thing to do for civil rights."

Dean's assessment of the political risk proved accurate. The Vermont constitution says that to win the general election for governor, you must win an absolute majority of votes. If no candidate gets more than 50 percent, the Senate chooses the governor. Following a particularly vitriolic 2000 campaign, in which a Republican opponent attacked him for being too liberal (for signing the civil-union law) and a third-party challenger accused him of being too conservative (on a variety of issues, including health care), the governor won with just 50.4 percent of the vote. A swing of only 1,300 votes would have tossed the election to the GOP-controlled Senate, which would almost surely have ousted Dean. "Those of us who took an awful lot of crap would like to have proudly stood there [at a public signing ceremony]," says Chard. "But I think he probably made the right decision not to continue the furor over the bill. That was an interesting choice and a political choice. It shows his savvy, which is greater than mine."

SAVVY IS NOT the word most political professionals would use to describe Dean's presidential campaign strategy. If elected president, Dean has said, he would repeal those portions of the Bush tax cut that benefit taxpayers making more than $150,000 per year (or couples making more than $300,000) and those portions scheduled to take effect in coming years. It's a controversial proposal: Of the other prospective Democratic candidates, only Joe Lieberman has come close, recommending that Congress freeze the tax cut next year unless the budget deficit is lower. But unlike his prospective competitors, who speak in hypotheticals and squirm whenever talk about the tax cut turns specific, Dean is not the least bit ambiguous about his intentions. In our interview, for example, it was the very first thing he mentioned when I asked about issues. "There is no excuse for us running the kind of deficits we're running," he said. His solution? "Stop the tax cuts right now."

With the money he'd save by rescinding upper-bracket cuts, Dean says he'd free up more than $1 trillion—enough to shore up Social Security by paying down debt; to finance a prescription-drug benefit for senior citizens; to fund the military generously; and, most important, to create a universal health care program for children modeled on Dr. Dynasaur. In the tax cut that so many Democrats consider a political liability, in other words, Dean sees a golden opportunity. In the past, Democrats advocating expansions of government had to raise taxes or cut military spending; now, Dean says, Democrats have an easier solution. "The good thing about the president's tax cut," he told me, "is that 1.6 billion dollars—which should never have passed—funds an awful lot."

There's a reason Dean's better-known rivals haven't proposed something similar: It's a gamble. But there's also some reason to believe Dean's message might resonate. According to a Zogby poll conducted in January, when asked whether or not they favored rolling back the tax cut, respondents split almost evenly. But this ratio shifted dramatically when the tax cut was juxtaposed against other budget priorities. Sixty-nine percent of respondents said they favored rescinding the tax cut and spending the money on education instead. Seventy-one percent said they'd be happier using the money to fund a prescription-drug benefit for seniors. And so on. Nor were these isolated findings. Polls earlier this year by the *Los Angeles Times*, ABCNEWS.com, and CNN, just to name a few, produced similar results.

Moreover, Dean's juxtaposition of the tax cut and health care spending may prove particularly appealing. Ever since the Clinton health care debacle, which cost Democrats not just their chance to reform the health insurance system but also their long-held House majority, all but the most liberal Democrats have eschewed sweeping health insurance expansions. But with health insurance premiums rising faster than they have since the early '90s (see "Health Scare," TNR, December 24, 2001), anxiety over access to basic health care is once again spreading upward from the poor to the middle class. In March, for example, 56 percent of respondents to a Gallup poll said they "personally worry ... a great deal" about the "availability and affordability of health care."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No other issue provoked such concern—not even the possibility of future terrorist attacks in the United States.

Of course, Americans have been known in opinion polls to oppose tax cuts while simultaneously punishing politicians who vote that way. But Dean is well-positioned to make his case. As a family doctor, he's a natural advocate for health care reform. As a governor who balanced budgets without raising income taxes, he can credibly say he is not a chronic tax-and-spender. And as a politician who says things politicians aren't supposed to say, he could win over voters who might not entirely agree with his positions but appreciate his candor. "I'll tell people not what they want to hear," Dean says, "but what they need to hear."

Perhaps even more than McCain, Dean's eat-your-vegetables honesty conjures up memories of another surprise insurgency: Paul Tsongas's run in 1992. Like McCain, Tsongas espoused a position unpopular in his own party—the need to emphasize deficit reduction over new spending. Like McCain, Tsongas benefited from seeming more authentic than his party's poll-tested front-runner. And like McCain, Tsongas changed his party without winning the nomination. Although Clinton didn't initially co-opt Tsongas's agenda in quite the way Bush later co-opted McCain's, the popular movement to reduce deficits that Tsongas unleashed lived on in the third-party candidacy of Ross Perot, ultimately forcing Clinton to embrace the fiscal conservatism that came to represent one of his significant political legacies.

FOR MCCAIN AND Tsongas—as well as for insurgents who actually did win their party's nomination, like Jimmy Carter—the catalyst was a win in one of the early, small-state contests where grassroots organizing and hand-to-hand campaigning are as important as television. In all three cases, winning either the Iowa caucuses or the New Hampshire primary allowed these outsiders to gain the kind of media coverage and financial support necessary to compete in the larger, ultimately decisive contests. Dean is explicitly copying these past mavericks, which is why, among other things, he's made five trips to Iowa already.

But Dean faces several major obstacles his predecessors did not. Massachusetts Senator John Kerry's presence in the race pretty much negates any regional advantage Dean might have in New Hampshire—especially since most Granite State voters get their TV news from Boston, not Burlington. It doesn't help that Kerry has millions of dollars to spend on paid television this year for a Senate race in which he is essentially unopposed. Iowa presents its own complications. Because Iowa's contest is a set of caucuses, not a straight primary vote, constituency groups with organizing ability are particularly influential—and none are likely to be of much help to Dean. Dick Gephardt will likely pull in labor if he runs; John Edwards will have the trial lawyers; and Al Gore—barring an Al Sharpton candidacy—should get the civil rights groups. The only two groups that might back Dean are the gay community, which isn't particularly influential among Iowans, and the medical community, which isn't particularly influential among Democrats.

More important, even if Dean *could* win Iowa or New Hampshire, it probably wouldn't provide him the same boost it has past candidates. Early this year the Democratic National Committee decreed that other states could stage their primaries as early as February 3, 2004—a full five weeks earlier than they were allowed to in 2000. Big states like California and New York, long excluded from a decisive role in the nomination process, are expected to take advantage of the new date, creating a "national primary" that could effectively determine the party nominee. To be competitive in this environment, a candidate will need name recognition well before Democrats in Iowa and New Hampshire ever make their selections. And getting name recognition in the absence of a primary requires the very assets outsiders typically lack: money and staff. As analyst Bill Schneider told *The Boston Globe* in January, "It's going to help the best-known candidates, and it's going to make it much more difficult for an unknown Democrat to pull a Jimmy Carter."

Indeed, Dean has recruited no big-time political professionals so far, instead putting the campaign in the hands of O'Connor, a trusted chief of staff who's been with him for years but has no experience running a national campaign. And although Dean has fund-raisers planned for the summer, including several in California, he lags far behind the other candidates. As of this spring, Dean's "Fund for a Healthy America" had raised $140,000. By contrast, Edwards had raised more than $1 million for his political action committee, while Lieberman had raised twice that—to say nothing of the huge war chest Kerry is filling for his Senate campaign. For now, Dean must still collect donations the way he collects supporters: one at a time.

WHICH BRINGS US back to the Greek Independence Day celebration. Ironically, the speeches—the reason Dean is here in the first place—never take place. The event is poorly organized, and, after an hour of people aimlessly milling around the podium, a woman who appears to be one of the coordinators announces that everybody should prepare to leave for the ensuing parade through the streets of Boston's Back Bay. It raises still more doubts about Dean's prospects: Can you imagine, say, Gephardt's or Gore's handlers dragging their man to a speaking engagement hundreds of miles away, only to find there is no actual speaking?

But Dean is unfazed. With an "honored guest" ribbon draped from shoulder to waist, Dean briskly marches along the downtown Boston parade route, then leads his newfound entourage (O'Connor, the security aide, and me) back from the Public Garden to Copley Square. Even as we walk among the crowd, not a soul seems to recognize him. Finally, I ask the governor whether this whole exercise hasn't been a waste of his time. "It was very successful," he assures me with a cocked smile. "One man back there told me he was definitely voting for me—when I run for mayor again." It's a great line, emblematic of the qualities that could make Howard Dean an important voice in the 2004 Democratic presidential primary. If only his party wanted it heard. ■

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Appreciation, Please

DO WE COUNT our blessings? Insufficiently, I'd say—in the film world, anyway. We are snowed with comment on film industry troubles and with almost as much about directors, but we see relatively little about actors—as actors, not personalities, some of whom at any moment in time are fine and a few of whom are better than that. The first-class actor gets scanty attention unless he or she is in a first-class film, and even then not always. Thus we cheat ourselves.

The subject plunks itself before us with the simultaneous appearance of two extraordinary actors, one in a middling film, the other in commercial fodder. The quality of a vehicle is, in the main, not the fault of its actors. Established actors have some chance to choose, but the biggest of them cannot often create good material and, usually, would rather act than not. At the recent Tony awards, the gifted Frank Langella said when he accepted his award that he had learned from forty years of experience that he must play the cards he is dealt. In other words, an award for acting depends in great degree on your getting a good role that year. Actors take the best that is available, but sometimes their luck runs out. More than once, through the years, I have praised talent in youngish men and women and have seen their subsequent poor choices, or lack of choices, drag them into darkness. Unlike most other artists, actors' careers are not solely in their hands.

What seems to me equally wasteful, at least in the honing of taste, is our lack of appreciation when talented people, keeping busy, are in minor work. In the theater, for one instance, I went four times to see Christopher Plummer, a great actor, in a rickety script called *Barrymore* because it gave Plummer a chance to exercise his art. I have seen Sidney Lumet's film *The Verdict* four times and would see it again tonight if I could, chiefly (though in this case not only) to see Paul Newman. The Plummer and Newman performances were only two of the blessings by actors that, I thought, have been inadequately valued.

The two current instances involve Ian Holm and Anthony Hopkins, who happen to share some data. Both are British, both are around seventy, both are short (Holm is five foot six, Hopkins an inch taller), both have had periods in their lives when personal problems kept them out of view, both have played King Lear, both have been knighted. And, as it happens, I have seen each of them on stage only once, Holm in Pinter's *The Homecoming*, Hopkins in Shaffer's *Equus*. In films, I have seen them often but not often enough.

Holm is now in **The Emperor's New Clothes** (Paramount Classics), in which he plays Napoleon. I felt something like nostalgia for the subject, which for many decades was a theater perennial and has had considerable screen life. (Marlon Brando and Charles Boyer played the emperor.) Holm not only plays Napoleon, he plays his double. These two roles are not his first appearance as the man. In a wild comedy called *Time Bandits* (1981) he did a funny Napoleonic vignette. (In this comic sketch the emperor is sensitive about his stature. He confides to someone: "You know why I invade Italy? The men are short.")

The screenplay of Holm's new film was adapted from a novel by Simon Leys. The basic idea is familiar from such past uses as *The Prince and the Pauper*, *The Prisoner of Zenda*, and *The Phantom President*: a double is found for a famous figure, and the use of the double for various purposes leads to trouble. Holm's Napoleon is a prisoner on St. Helena and, with the help of loyal aides, has located a physical double in France. The double is brought to the island secretly so that Napoleon can leave without the British guards being aware that he has escaped. The real emperor will then appear in France, the people will rejoice, and the double will be discarded. Of course this is not what happens.

Alan Taylor directed aptly, the cinematography by Alessio Gelsini Torresi is exquisite, Rachel Portman's music is perfect; but it is Holm who carries the film. He has the good actor's gift of intense concentration. From the first moment, his experience and confidence make him who he says he is and sweep away doubts before they arise in us. The actor who ranged from the track coach in *Chariots of Fire* to Joe Gould in *Joe Gould's Secret* to the New York detective in *Night Falls on Manhattan* to the lawyer in *The Sweet Hereafter*—a mere sampling—is not to be fazed by imperial demand. A key moment comes when Napoleon is back in France and reveals his identity to an army officer. In the middle of an open field, the officer falls to his knees before his emperor, and Holm, solely with inner conviction, makes us credit the officer's response.

The return to France, history being to some degree film-proof, does not have the planned effect, and Holm takes the role through another metamorphosis. The film is only pleasant hokum, but I am glad that it exists so that Holm's performance(s) can exist.

Hopkins is in a much inferior piece, a political thriller called **Bad Company** (Touchstone). Here the actor who has endowed the screen with such treasures as Nixon in *Nixon*, the butler in *Remains of the Day*, John Quincy Adams in *Amistad*, Henry Wilcox in *Howards End*, the divorced parent in *The Good Father*, and, of course, Hannibal Lecter in *The Silence of the Lambs* now plays a CIA agent. The central plot gimmick yet again is a hijacked nuclear bomb, though this story is marginally better than *The Sum of All Fears*, last week's entry in the field. Hopkins has to talk with a toothpick in his mouth, wear a baseball cap, engage (at his age) in strenuous action, kill a number of people, and speak such lines as, in the middle of a gunfight, "Get the bomb, Jake. I'll cover you." The contrast between the quality of the role and the quality of the actor is so blatant so quickly that the film soon has a huge question mark superimposed on the screen. Why is Hopkins in it?

Discount the money and the fact of employment as reasons too unstringent, and one possible answer is the corny role itself. Perhaps Hopkins's reason is in one of his lines. He is training a protégé, and in the middle of action he says to his trainee with a quiet smile: "Isn't this fun?" I can believe that this fun was why he accepted the picture, the fun that he gets from doing something so different from what we expect of him. It is almost as if he is silently chuckling at our surprise.

Alas, it is impossible to say that what Hopkins does here could not have been done equally well by another actor. Double alas, in bits of it someone else would even be better. And the last shot implies that he may be marrying a young female

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

colleague (a nondescript role played by Brooke Smith, who was the heartbreaking Sonya in Andre Gregory's *Vanya on 42nd Street*). Holm, Hopkins's coeval, also gets romance in his film. Congratulations, both.

Anyone who sees *Bad Company* without an education in Hopkins will wonder why this slightly chubby elderly man with traces of a British accent is in this part. Others of us may get some of the fun that Hopkins seems to be having. It's a bit like a master cellist playing "The Flight of the Bumblebee." OK. Enjoyable for him and for us. Now, onward.

Still, both of these films remind us that the state of the acting available from all over the world is usually better than the state of films. That persistence of good acting is a blessing. ■

The Experiment

By RUTH FRANKLIN

The Double Bond: Primo Levi A Biography by Carole Angier

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 898 pp., $40)

I.

PRIMO LEVI, CHRONICLER of the twentieth century's darkest inferno, has been called a Dante for our time. Like Dante, Levi maps out the full panorama of his hell, and like Dante he pays special attention to its human inhabitants. Often in *If This Is a Man*, his memoir of his time in Auschwitz, Levi pauses to introduce characters as pathetic and as terrifying as Francesca or Ugolino: the compulsive Steinlauf, who believes that washing his face is a meaningful way of asserting his power over the Nazis; Elias the dwarf, who has superhuman strength and a variety of skills—tailoring, woodworking, and the ability to "ingest ten, fifteen, twenty pints of soup without vomiting and without having diarrhea"; Henri, the supreme organizer, "once seen in the act of eating a real hard-boiled egg," whose talent is for human exploitation, and who is the only one of his fellow prisoners whom Levi says that he does not want ever to see again.

Yet more terrifying than any of these characters is one who appears after liberation, as Levi is recovering from scarlet fever. Nearby lies a three-year-old child, "a child of death, a child of Auschwitz," who may have been born in the camp, and who was never taught to speak. An older boy, Henek, discovers that the child, whom a nurse has named Hurbinek, can say a word, but it is a word that nobody recognizes. "In the following days everybody listened to him in silence, anxious to understand, and among us there were speakers of all the languages of Europe; but Hurbinek's word remained secret." No one ever learns the meaning of Hurbinek's word. He dies in March, 1945, "free but not redeemed."

Hurbinek embodies the survivor's nightmare: to speak and not to be heard. While at Auschwitz, Levi himself dreamed of telling about the hunger, the lice, the cruelty of the Kapos, to people who ignore him; in the dream his sister "looks at me, gets up, and goes away without a word." After his return from the camp, Levi would spend the rest of his life testifying as compulsively as the Ancient Mariner: a citation from Coleridge serves as the epigraph to his final published book. But despite all the evidence to the contrary—the schoolchildren who pestered him with questions, the readers from many countries, including Germany, who sent him letters—Levi, too, may have felt that he was speaking into a void.

This is the thesis of Carole Angier's far-reaching, moving, yet ultimately unsatisfying biography. Levi, Angier argues, lived a double life: externally calm, rational, light-hearted; internally conflicted, guilty, self-doubting. Though he exorcised the urge to testify in his numerous books, in his personal life Levi remained locked in an interior world, unable to overcome the

ADVERTISEMENT

TNR BOOKMARK

THE PLACE TO FIND YOUR FAVORITE BOOKS.

Basic Books
1-800-386-5656
www.basicbooks.com

Brookings Institute Press
1-800-275-1447
www.brookings.ed/bipress

Cambridge University Press
1-800-872-7423
www.cambridge.org

Cato Institute
1-800-767-1241
www.cato.org

Encounter Books
1-800-786-3839
www.encounterbooks.com

Johns Hopkins University Press
1-800-537-5487
www.jhupbooks.com

NYU Press
1-800-996-NYUP
www.nyupress.org

Powell's Books
1-866-201-7601
www.powells.com

Princeton University Press
1-800-777-4726
www.pup.princeton.edu

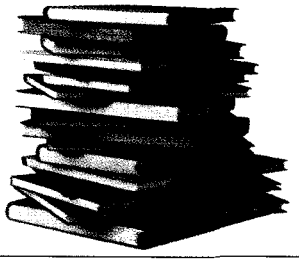
Routledge
1-800-634-7064
www.routledge-ny.com

Transaction Publishers
1-888-999-6778
www.transactionpub.com

University of Chicago Press
1-800-621-2736
www.press.uchicago.edu

Yale University Press
1-800-405-1619
www.yalebooks.com

Additional information on our advertisers and direct links to their websites can be found at **www.tnr.com**



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

barriers that he set up between himself and others. This conflict, Angier says, destroyed Levi from the inside out, crippling him with depressions that recurred with increasing intensity throughout his life, until his suicide in 1987.

Angier's book is not a critical biography or an intellectual biography. It is an emotional biography. As such, much of her version of Levi's life—though it omits some important details, and includes some inappropriate details—is convincing. There can be no doubt that the emotional dimension of Levi's story is an important one, especially if we are to have some understanding of why, or even whether, he killed himself. Even before his death, there were suggestions that Levi's personal life was not as peaceful as it appeared. He lived in the same apartment with his mother for nearly all his life. Though his life was his own greatest subject, he was fanatically secretive about both his wife and his mother, except to complain about the latter's ailments. And his suicide was deeply mysterious: since he died in a plunge from his third-floor landing and left no note, there has been much speculation that his death was an accident.

For a writer as intensely, compulsively autobiographical as Levi, the personal can seem inseparable from the professional. The problem is that Levi's life as a writer is open for inspection, but his life as a man is not. Even in Levi's autobiographical writings, the carefully constructed persona acts as an invisible wall to shield the man within. At best, an emotional biography of a writer as private as Levi will be founded upon doubts and speculations. At worst, it will rely on the possibly mistaken assumptions of friends and family members, many of whom may not have understood Levi or may have been motivated by their own biases and jealousies. But though the inner life of any person must always remain unknown to others, a biography that betrays no hint of the personal is no better than a death mask. A biography that intends to depict a life in all its fullness must at some points shift between the verifiable and the possible.

II.

PRIMO LEVI'S LIFE as a writer began in earnest almost at the moment he arrived at Auschwitz. "I was conscious of living the fundamental experience of my life," he wrote later. "The idea of *having* to survive in order to tell what I had seen obsessed me night and day." He would say that he was "saved by my trade": as a chemist, he was given preferential treatment and was eventually assigned to a Kommando that worked indoors in a laboratory, with an extra ration of soup. But it was also his vocation as a writer that saved him. He may have survived in order to become a writer, but he also became a writer in order to survive.

Levi "distilled" (as he put it) his eleven months at Auschwitz into the slim volume *Se questo è un uomo*, or *If This Is a Man*. (It was published in America under the true but infelicitous title *Survival in Auschwitz*.) He wrote that he considered the camp "pre-eminently a gigantic biological and social experiment," and the book is in some ways similar to a laboratory report: it includes detailed analyses of the soup and the bread served at Auschwitz, and the "selections" in which the SS weeded out those not of obvious utility, and the literally back-breaking labor required of even the weakest of the prisoners chosen for work rather than for death. But the book is also an experiment in itself, and like some of the procedures that Levi recounts in *The Periodic Table*, its goal is to distill. What it distills is the essence of Auschwitz: the "demolition" of the prisoners' humanity, as Levi puts it. "It is not possible to sink lower than this; no human condition is more miserable than this, nor could it conceivably be so," he writes early on in *If This Is a Man*. "Nothing belongs to us any more; they have taken away our clothes, our shoes, even our hair; if we speak, they will not listen to us, and if they listen, they will not understand. They will even take away our name: and if we want to keep it, we will have to find ourselves the strength to do so, to manage somehow so that behind the name something of us, of us as we were, still remains."

When all the trappings of humanity are taken away, what does remain? This question is at the heart of *If This Is a Man*, starting with the title, from a poem by Levi called "Shema," which serves as the book's epigraph. Here are the relevant lines:

> You who live safe
> In your warm houses,
> You who find, returning in the evening,
> Hot food and friendly faces:
> Consider if this is a man
> Who works in the mud
> Who does not know peace
> Who fights for a scrap of bread
> Who dies because of a yes or a no....

"Consider if this is a man": if Auschwitz was a laboratory, then this was Primo Levi's hypothesis. He argues convincingly that the Nazis' intent to dehumanize was evident in every increment of their plan, from the lack of latrines on the transports to Auschwitz to the practice of addressing prisoners by number rather than by name. Levi will ultimately conclude that a man cannot really be dehumanized, which reveals the depth of the Nazis' depravity: they tried to reduce people past the limits of reducibility. And yet Levi's book also shows that a man can come very, very close to ceasing to be a man; and even so it is impossible to say that he is no longer a man, because to do so is to think like a Nazi.

FOR CAROLE ANGIER, the question of what makes a man was the central question of Primo Levi's life. Levi, she writes, was beset from childhood with doubts about whether he himself could be fully considered a man. He was shy, he was not good-looking, he was attracted to women and pathologically afraid of them. He dealt with his doubts by repressing them, presenting a calm exterior and hinting of them to only a few friends. Levi is often seen as the supreme rationalist of the Holocaust writers, the decorous humanist, his work dispassionate and rigorously reasoned. Angier argues that in his personal life Levi was a rationalist to a fault: he "chose to live only in the rational half of himself, and closed the door on the other."

Angier takes the title of her book from a manuscript that Levi was writing at the time of his death. This unfinished book, which remains unpublished, was intended as a sequel to *The Periodic Table*, his famous autobiography through chemistry, and it takes the form of letters written by a chemist to a woman whom he is instructing in basic chemistry. Levi titled the book *Il doppio legame*, which can mean either "the double bond" or "the double bind"; the first term from chemistry, the second term from psychology. The double bond is the way in which organic molecules attach to each other: they connect "at two or even more points, making possible richer but also less stable combinations." The double bind Angier defines as "a crippling conflict between contradictory or unfulfillable requirements, which you can neither escape nor win." She sees both—though primarily the latter—as a metaphor for Levi's life.

Angier's approach will not appeal to everyone. She is unrelenting in her pursuit of the personal, and she can be mawkish. Though she comments very effectively on certain aspects of Levi's writing, anyone looking for literary criticism should look elsewhere. Her book has passages of much grace, but it is bloated. She assumes a broad base of knowledge about Levi's books, failing to adequately introduce much of his work. And her speculation about Levi's wife and mother is astonishingly one-sided, utterly lacking the sympathy with which she treats so many of the other figures in his life.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Most controversially, Angier confesses in the introduction that at times she has "felt or imagined the past from a story, or from an encounter." This is not as dubious as it sounds, because the chapters in which she does this form a sort of "shadow biography": they are set apart from the main text, with their headings in italics, and anyone wishing to avoid speculation about Levi's life could simply skip them. Angier comments that these chapters have an "unstable bond" with Levi, but her own relationship with them is slippery as well. By setting them apart from the text and emphasizing their reliance on guesswork rather than scholarship, she appears to disavow them; but at the same time she says that she believes these "irrational chapters" to be "*more* true" than the rational ones. Angier really does seem to believe that she has gotten inside Levi's head, and maybe she has. But her perceived intimacy with him dominates the book, leading to a sense that she is too close to her subject, whom she refers to throughout by his first name.

The major feat of Angier's biography is that at many points she does convince even the skeptical reader of her good judgment. For a start, she has been a scrupulous researcher, indefatigably tracking down every living person who played a role in Levi's life. (His wife and his children, as is their custom, did not speak to her, and Levi's papers are still sealed.) No anecdote from any of Levi's memoirs is repeated in her biography without independent confirmation or clarification, often from more than one source. Angier also freely confesses her own disappointment when a source has denied a story about Levi that she has hoped to be true. By revealing so much of her methodology—particularly in the earliest of the "shadow" chapters, in which she hikes with Levi's old friend Alberto Salmoni, and delights in confronting a class bully with a short story in which Levi portrayed him unflatteringly—Angier allows the reader to see what her encounters with her sources must have been like, and why Levi's friends and relatives might have trusted her with intimate information. Though her speculations may sometimes go too far into Levi's personal life, there is never a sense of exploitation. Angier's goal is to tell the story of Levi's life as completely as possible, because she believes that it is what he wanted to do himself.

The book's major flaw is its heavy reliance on *Il doppio legame*, a source that Angier takes as her book's counterpart: Levi's emotional autobiography. (I will refer to this book by its Italian title so as to avoid confusion with the title of Angier's book.) Though she questions everything else that he has said about himself in his books, in this last book she seems to take Levi at his word, confirmed only by the most questionable of sources—two unnamed women with whom Levi apparently had lengthy affairs. Angier recognizes that the woman to whom the narrator of this book addresses his letters has no direct correspondent in Levi's life: she is a composite of several women he loved, a fiction. But Angier takes what the narrator says about himself to be the literal truth of Levi's life, when in fact there is no reason to believe that the narrator of *Il doppio legame* has any more or less in common with Levi than the narrators of any of Levi's other works of fiction. Levi ended his preface to *If This Is a Man* with the somber statement, "It seems to me unnecessary to add that none of the facts are invented." But it is worth remembering that none of his other books bears such a disclaimer.

III.

From the first chapter of *The Periodic Table*, in which Levi uses the element argon to represent his ancestors—"noble, inert, and rare"—it is clear that there is much we are not meant to take literally. To begin with, the stories Levi tells in this chapter are not limited to his own family members. "After *The Periodic Table* was published, he said, friends frequently remarked to him: 'It's odd, but my grandfather said exactly the same thing as yours,'" Angier reports. "The reason was, of course, that it was their grandfather." When the stories do concern Levi's relatives, they are carefully edited. He alludes to his grandfather's suicide, but disguises the circumstances of his grandmother's remarriage; and he does not mention at all the suicide of his great-uncle.

Levi was unhappy at school, despite his academic excellence: "*Primo Levi primo*," a friend would say, reporting that he was first in the class. He was close to his sister Anna Maria, and apparently also to his mother, with whom he would live in the same Turin apartment for his entire life (except for a brief period in Milan and the year he spent at Auschwitz). Levi's parents' marriage seems to have been unhappy. Cesare Levi, Levi's father, was a playboy, and carried on a long affair with his secretary. Rina, as Angier calls Levi's mother (her name was Ester, but the family called her Rina), was, "like most Jewish women of her generation," a "*regina della casa*," a queen of the house.

Levi never spoke nor wrote about his mother, giving as his reason that she was still alive. (She outlived him by four years.) But some family friends and relatives imply that there were other reasons. Angier

ADVERTISEMENT

TNR NETWORK

THE PLACE TO FIND YOUR FAVORITE ADVERTISERS.

CNN.com / Crossfire
www.cnn.com

Black Alliance for Educational Options
1-202-544-9870
www.baeo.org

Educational Testing Service
1-609-734-1230
www.ets.org

Fannie Mae
1-202-752-7000
www.fanniemae.org

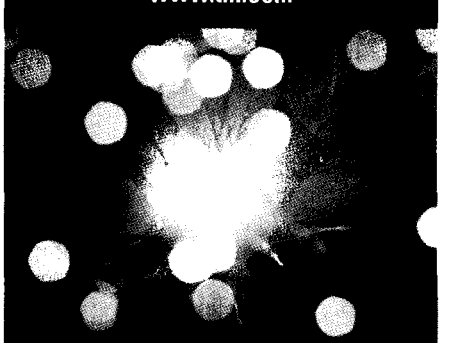
Hoover Institution
1-877-466-8374
www.hoover.org

Alliance for Advancing Non-Profit Healthcare
1-847-920-0170
www.nonprofithealthcare.org

Nuclear Energy Institute
1-202-739-8000
www.nei.org

United Parcel Service
1-800-PICK-UPS
(1-800-742-5877)
www.ups.com

Additional information on our advertisers and direct links to their websites can be found at www.tnr.com



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

finds her version of the story in two novels, one by Paolo Levi (Levi's first cousin), the other by Luisa Accati, daughter of Levi's longtime employer and close friend. Both books feature happy-go-lucky men married to puritanical, stern women. In Accati's novel, the parents' honeymoon ends with the mother claiming to be "not a normal woman," and the husband's infidelity is the result of his "rejec[tion] by his frigid and punishing wife." Though other sources confirm that something very similar was the rumor in Turin about the Levis' marriage, Angier does not fully acknowledge the dubiousness of basing her conception of the family on these novels. And yet other evidence seems to confirm them. A family friend, describing to Angier how strict Rina was, wonders "if Primo had once been hugged by his mother." Late in life, Levi would tell an interviewer that he could not remember a single occasion on which his mother had kissed him.

COURTESY HUTCHINSON

Primo Levi and Alberto Salmoni, circa 1940

LEVI ENTERED TURIN'S Chemical Institute in 1937, just before the racial laws were established in Italy. Zinc becomes the metaphor in *The Periodic Table* for this point in his life, in a chapter that focuses on questions of purity and impurity, in both metals and romance. Zinc, Levi learns, resists interaction when it is in a very pure state; he finds this imperturbability "disgustingly moralistic," and prefers the zinc impure, "which gives rise to changes, in other words, to life." When he discovers that Rita, to whom he is attracted, is working on the same experiment, he has something to bridge the racial barrier that separates them: "I ... am Jewish and she is not: I am the impurity that makes the zinc react, I am the grain of salt or mustard." He endeavors to walk her home, and in the last image of the chapter he triumphantly takes her arm. But Angier has tracked "Rita" down—her real name is Clara Moschino—and she does not remember the walk home, or Levi taking her arm. "Perhaps [Angier interjects] he did do it, on another occasion.... She can see that I would like at least this to be true. So she says firmly but gently that she does not think so. He may have wanted to do it, or dreamed of doing it, but he did not." And so, of course, both Rita and the story's narrator are fictions. As Angier discovers again and again, Levi's stories were autobiographical, but they were not autobiography.

Levi graduated in 1941 with high honors, but due to the racial laws he had difficulty finding a job. Eventually he was offered employment in a mine, where he had to work under a false name so as to hide "my abominable origin." Two percent of what the mine produced was asbestos; the rest was detritus, from which Levi was supposed to extract nickel. This alchemical dream of extracting "gold from dung" becomes a central metaphor of *The Periodic Table*, as well as of other books. But Levi quickly grew tired of this futile task and moved to a factory outside Milan. Here, too, his work was nonsensical: he was to measure the phosphorous levels of plants and then inject them into rabbits in the hope of finding a cure for diabetes. And here he again fell in love, this time with Gabriella Garda, a former classmate. In the climax of the "phosphorous" chapter of *The Periodic Table*, he takes her on the handlebars of his bicycle to her fiancé's house, where she must convince his parents to allow her to marry their son. Levi waits outside, hoping she will not succeed, but of course she does. This chapter, Angier finds, is almost entirely true. Yet a crucial detail is invented: that Garda threatened to scream, "Get your hands off me, you pig!" when Levi refused to accompany her home from the cinema. When Levi showed her the manuscript, Angier reports, Garda asked him to remove that part, but he refused, telling her that it revealed her nature better than anything that actually took place. Again, when the materials life provided ran short, Levi improvised.

On September 8, 1943, the Nazis occupied Italy, and Levi returned home to Turin. He joined a band of partisans fighting in the mountains, but lasted only a month and a half before they were betrayed. He was arrested and held briefly in prison, then sent with three friends to Fossoli, a holding camp. *If This Is a Man* begins on Levi's last night in Fossoli, before his deportation to Auschwitz.

IV.

"WITHOUT ANY DELIBERATE effort, memory continues to restore to me events, faces, words, sensations, as if at that time my mind had gone through a period of exalted receptivity, during which not a detail was lost," Levi would write many years later to describe his unusual mental capacities during his time at Auschwitz. Among the many former prisoners Angier interviews, not one disputes the substance of Levi's account—even Henri (whose real name is Paul Steinberg) acknowledges the truth of Levi's ugly portrait of him. Levi said numerous times that not a single word or episode of *If This Is a Man* was invented. He wrote the first draft in the first year after the war, and the only changes that he made later were to add characters or his own commentary.

But despite its adherence to fact, *If This Is a Man* is a fundamentally literary book, with a highly stylized use of language. Levi always refers to the camp as the "Lager" and to the prisoners as "Häftlinge": "the Lager's language was a German apart," he explained later. He portrays Auschwitz as a "perpetual Babel, in which everyone shouts orders and threats in languages never heard before, and woe betide who-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ever fails to grasp the meaning." From the start, all official information is disseminated in German, and those who cannot understand it are more likely to be sent to the wrong side. People died "at first sight of hunger, cold, fatigue, disease; on closer examination, of insufficient information." Language works its perversity until the end; in his last days at Auschwitz, spent in the infirmary, Levi hears dying men around him succumb to delirium: one mutters "*Jawohl*" for two days straight, another mimics the speeches of a Kapo.

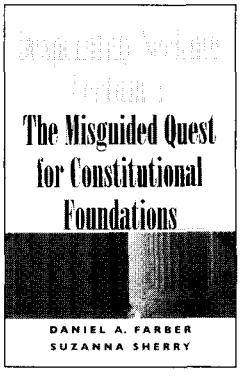
But amid the Babel Levi is formulating exact, potent phrases. The Germans run the camp with "absurd precision." The prisoners, stripped and shaved, are "a hundred miserable and sordid puppets." His book is so detailed that one wishes prisoners entering the camp could have used it as a manual. All the rules are elucidated: how many buttons one must have on one's shirt, how to exchange ill-fitting shoes, where to stand in line to receive the heartiest portion of soup. Levi does not shrink from the disgusting: there is an extended passage on the importance of properly timing one's nighttime visits to the latrine bucket so as to avoid being the one who must empty it, since the contents will inevitably overflow onto one's feet.

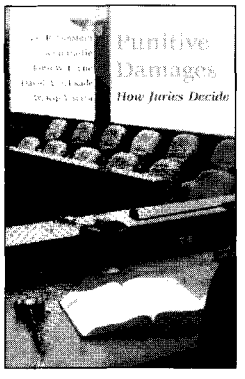
Only by learning these unofficial rules of the Lager can anyone hope to survive. But this presents Levi with a "double bind," which, in Angier's reading, would be a source of guilt for the rest of his life. In *The Drowned and the Saved*, his last published book, Levi wrote that "the worst—that is, the fittest—survived. The best all died." The "worst" are not necessarily the brutes, but those prisoners, such as Elias and Henri, who play the system without scruple. And "the best" are not necessarily those who courageously resisted—such as Lorenzo, a civilian who worked alongside Levi in the Buna factory at Auschwitz and often brought him extra food and posted letters to Italy for him, who would survive—but "the most delicate, the most innocent," who "could not bear to see degradation and bestiality everywhere, to lie and steal," as Angier writes. One wishes that she had acknowledged the perversity of this idea: surely many good people also survived and many bad people also died. Needless to say, the best did not all die, and to say that they did is an insult to all survivors. Levi may have felt that he himself was among "the worst," but no one who knew him would have agreed.

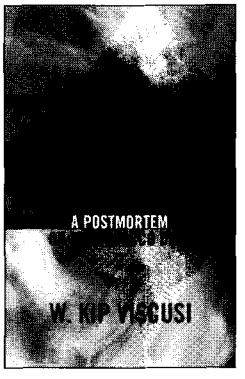
The germ of this terrible idea, sadly, is evident as early as *If This Is a Man*. Nothing is so easy at Auschwitz as dying: "it is enough to carry out all the orders one received, to eat only the ration, to observe the discipline of the work and the camp," Levi writes. To survive, one has to be

LAW and Society

New from Chicago







Desperately Seeking Certainty
The Misguided Quest for Constitutional Foundations
Daniel A. Farber and Suzanna Sherry

"A whirlwind tour of constitutional theory, persuasively arguing that the work of our most prominent scholars falls short of the mark. . . . A primer for lay readers, *Desperately Seeking Certainty* is provocative and penetrating even for those on the inside of the constitutional theory game. Farber and Sherry have given us a wonderful book."—Barry Friedman, New York University School of Law

Cloth $30.00

Punitive Damages
How Juries Decide
Cass R. Sunstein, Reid Hastie, John W. Payne, David A. Schkade, and W. Kip Viscusi

How do juries actually make decisions about punitive damages? To find out, the authors—experts in psychology, economics, and the law—present a wealth of new experimental data, offer a host of provocative findings, and document a wide range of systematic biases in jury behavior. It will be indispensable for anyone interested not only in punitive damages, but also jury behavior, psychology, and how people think about punishment.

Cloth $35.00

Smoke-Filled Rooms
A Postmortem on the Tobacco Deal
W. Kip Viscusi

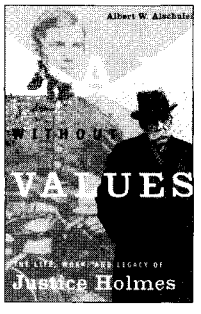
"Kip Viscusi, who has frequently appeared as an expert witness for the industry, uses this briskly written volume to take his case to the public. . . . He raises fundamental questions of legal process [and] social policy. One can be thoroughly persuaded of the dangers of smoking and still be won by Viscusi's trenchant attack on the means and ends of the tobacco deal."—Richard Epstein, author of *Principles for a Free Society: Studies in Law and Economics*

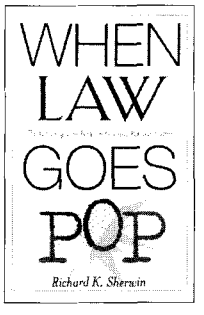
Cloth $27.50

Available in bookstores.

The University of Chicago Press
www.press.uchicago.edu

NOW IN PAPER!





Law Without Values
The Life, Work, and Legacy of Justice Holmes
Albert W. Alschuler

"An exuberantly and entertainingly polemical attack on the character, scholarship and philosophy of America's most revered judicial saint."
—Jeffrey Rosen, *New York Times Book Review*

Paper $18.00

When Law Goes Pop
The Vanishing Line between Law and Popular Culture
Richard K. Sherwin

"A brilliant analysis of the jury system in our media-saturated age. . . . Discerning readers will see a truly integrative intelligence at work, proposing possible solutions rather than simply bemoaning problems."—*Publishers Weekly*

Paper $19.00

Commentaries on the Laws of England
A Facsimile of the First Edition of 1765–1769
William Blackstone

This handsomely produced, slipcased four-volume set of Blackstone's *Commentaries* includes facsimiles of the eighteenth-century first edition, undistorted by later interpolations. Supplemented with commentary by experts in the field, these volumes belong on every lawyer's bookshelves.

4 Volumes, slipcased

Cloth $195.00

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prepared to take special measures: to steal, to seek out preferential treatment for oneself at the expense of others. Levi ended *The Truce*, the sequel to *If This Is a Man*, with the observation that "only after many months did I lose the habit of walking with my glance fixed to the ground, as if searching for something to eat or to pocket hastily or to sell for bread." He eventually manages to finagle a privileged role for himself on the Chemical Kommando, which enables him to work indoors, with a larger daily ration and more comfortable clothing.

But Levi felt that he was singled out in another way as well. In the climax of *If This Is a Man*, Levi and Pikolo, the Kapo's assistant, have gone to collect the day's kettle of soup. Pikolo mentions that he would like to learn Italian, and Levi seizes the opportunity to recite from Dante. As Levi recites the story of Ulysses, he explicates:

> Here, listen Pikolo, open your ears and your mind, you have to understand, for my sake:
>
> "Consider your seed:
> You were not made to live like brutes,
> But to follow virtue and knowledge."
>
> As if I also was hearing it for the first time: like the blast of a trumpet, like the voice of God. For a moment I forget who I am and where I am.

The implications of these lines in the Lager are obvious. "A man was *made to pursue virtue and knowledge*—he was mind and will, ideal and reason," Angier writes. But Levi does not want to stop with reciting Dante; he has a glimpse of the possibilities for his own future. "If Dante had looked into Ulysses as into a mirror, so in turn did Primo.... Now his ambition was far from ordinary. It was—as he told Pikolo then, many times—to record and report Auschwitz to the world."

HE WOULD BEGIN to do so almost immediately. Levi contracted scarlet fever in early January, 1945. The camp was evacuated on January 18, and almost no one survived the subsequent death march. Levi waited out the evacuation in the infirmary. In a final Allied raid, the power and water lines were cut, and the SS fled, leaving the prisoners behind. Levi and two others were able to salvage a stove. After the room was warm, one of the inmates proposed that everyone give a piece of whatever bread he had left to the three workers. "Only a day before a similar event would have been inconceivable," Levi wrote. "The law of the Lager said: 'eat your own bread, and if you can, that of your neighbor,' and left no room for gratitude. It really meant that the Lager was dead."

The Truce (published in America as *The Reawakening*) begins with the arrival of the Russians to liberate Auschwitz. As soon as Levi is well enough, he is sent to a transit camp in Kraków. Here he meets "the Greek," the first of the fantastic characters to accompany him on his journey. The Greek leads Levi to the market and tells him to find out the going rate for shirts. Whereas in the Lager language barriers meant death, in the post-Auschwitz world they are the stuff of comedy. And so Levi makes his way around the market, learning the Polish for "how much" and "what time" and "gentlemen." He stops a priest to find out where the soup kitchen is, and with no other language in common they converse in Latin: "*Pater optime*," Levi asks, "*ubi est mensa pauperorum?*"

These hilarious episodes recur as Levi winds his circuitous way from Poland to Belarus and finally down through Romania, Hungary, and Austria to Italy. After the Babel of Auschwitz, Levi cannot repress his glee at being able to make himself understood in language after language. When the war ends, he is in a transit camp in the Polish town of Katowice, and can follow the news even without understanding Polish. "We read 'Vienna,' 'Koblenz,' 'Rhine'; then 'Bologna'; then, with emotion and joy, 'Turin' and 'Milan.' Finally, 'Mussolini,' in enormous letters, followed by an awesome and indecipherable past participle; and at last, in red ink, covering half a page, the final, cryptic, and exhilarating announcement: 'BERLIN UPADL!'" Even miscommunication, when it occurs, is largely for comic effect. The huckster Cesare wants Levi to teach him German so that he can woo a Polish girl, but "the things he wanted to learn from me are not taught in any German language course, nor had I had the slightest occasion to learn them in Auschwitz; moreover, they were such subtle and idiomatic questions that I suspect that they do not exist in any language other than Italian and French." Much of this comedy is almost certainly exaggerated for effect, and Angier's interviews with "Cesare" turn up a number of discrepancies. Levi was playing with a much looser hand than in *If This Is a Man*.

Levi's newfound language skills are providential, because he is seized with the desire to speak about his experiences to anyone he sees. He tells his tale for the first time on a train platform in Trzebinia. (It is, uncannily, the station where travelers visiting Auschwitz today change trains.) He speaks "at dizzy speed" of all that has happened; but he suddenly realizes that his interpreter is identifying him as a political prisoner, not as a Jew. When he asks why, he is told: "*La guerre n'est pas finie.*" As if on cue, his listeners begin to disperse; his nightmare has come true.

The ending of *The Truce* quietly annihilates the comedy that has preceded it. "A dream full of horror has still not ceased to visit me, at sometimes frequent, sometimes longer, intervals," Levi writes.

> I am sitting at a table with my family, or with friends, or at work, or in the green countryside; in short, in a peaceful relaxed environment, apparently without tension or affliction; yet I feel a deep and subtle anguish, the definite sensation of an impending threat. And in fact, as the dream proceeds, slowly or brutally, each time in a different way, everything collapses and disintegrates around me, the scenery, the walls, the people, while the anguish becomes more intense and more precise. Now everything has changed to chaos; I am alone in the center of a gray and turbid nothing, and now, I *know* what this thing means, and I also know that I have always known it. I am in the Lager once more, and nothing is true outside the Lager. All the rest was a brief pause, a deception of the senses, a dream; my family, nature in flower, my home. Now this inner dream, this dream of peace, is over, and in the outer dream, which continues, gelid, a well-known voice resounds: a single word, not imperious, but brief and subdued. It is the dawn command of Auschwitz, a foreign word, feared and expected: get up, "*wstawać.*"

V.

"NOTHING IS TRUE outside the Lager." This, as much as the fear of not being understood, is the survivor's nightmare. Tadeusz Borowski wrote of it in poetry he published soon after the war; he killed himself in 1951. Sarah Kofman wrote of it in her remarkable memoir *Rue Ordener, Rue Labat*, published in 1994; she killed herself the same year. It seems self-evident: how could anyone living under the weight of such great despair not commit suicide? Primo Levi's son was quoted after his father's death as saying, "Read the ending of *The Truce* and you'll understand."

But his remark was probably flippant. It is too easy to say, as the newspapers at the time did, that "Auschwitz killed [Levi] forty years later." And it is a non sequitur. The fact that both Kofman and Levi killed themselves shortly after writing their last books—Kofman was writing about her experiences in the Holocaust for the first time, Levi was returning to the topic after a long break—certainly does

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not mean that it was writing about the Holocaust that killed them. It could just as easily be the other way around: that Auschwitz kept Levi alive for forty years as a writer, and that after *The Drowned and the Saved* he was unable to regain a sense of purpose in life.

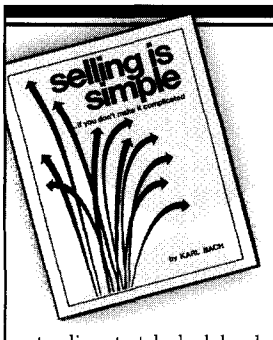
Angier argues that "the untold story" of Levi's life, and of his death, was depression. "Primo Levi was depressed before and after Auschwitz, but not in it," she writes. "It is even possible to say that without the experience of surviving Auschwitz, and without the mission to understand and testify to it, [suicide] might have claimed him sooner." His first major depression, she says, occurred in winter 1946–1947, after he had finished the first draft of *If This Is a Man*, which was promptly rejected by Natalia Ginzburg at Einaudi. Angier finds the root of this depression in an encounter Levi had with Nico Dallaporta, a former professor. Dallaporta told Levi that God must have spared him so that he would bear witness. Levi was horrified, and said that the very idea was monstrous and unjust. "The suggestion had touched 'an exposed nerve,' he wrote later," Angier comments. "Of course he had never imagined that God had chosen him to testify; but *he had chosen himself*, which made the injustice his own." He, who did not believe that any man had a right to be spared at Auschwitz instead of any other, had secretly hoped for just that: to live in order to be its chronicler, "the new Dante," as he had realized when reciting the Canto of Ulysses.

Levi came out of this depression when he met Lucia Morpurgo; they were married in September, 1947. *If This Is a Man* was published the following month. It initially sank into oblivion, but Levi began work on *The Truce* immediately. At the same time he was also writing fiction: some of the stories destined for *The Periodic Table*, as well as others that Angier describes as moral fables about science, which Levi published under the title *Storie naturali*, "natural histories." She convincingly reads many of these as metaphors for Levi's internal struggles. In "*L'amico dell'uomo*" ("Man's Friend"), a professor discovers that the cells of certain tapeworms reveal patterns that correspond to terza rima. The parasites, he realizes, have made themselves into poems addressed to their hosts. Alas, they go unread, since the hosts are uninterested in missives from their intestines. Angier hears in this an echo of a lament Levi made years later of the difficulty of communication: "whoever writes ... writes in his own code, which others do not know."

Meanwhile Levi had begun working at SIVA, the paint and varnish factory where he would remain until his retirement in 1977, eventually becoming director general. Despite its initial failure, he pushed to have *If This Is a Man* republished, especially with the swell of interest in Holocaust memoirs around 1955, the tenth anniversary of liberation. Einaudi finally accepted it, bringing out a revised version in 1958; it was published in the United States a year later, and in Germany in 1961. *The Truce*, which Levi called his first "consciously literary" book, appeared in 1963; and after that Levi never stopped publishing. *Storie naturali* appeared in 1966, followed by *Vizio di forma*—another, less successful, collection of stories—in 1971. (Neither exists in its entirety in English.) Levi's masterpiece *The Periodic Table* appeared in 1975. After his retirement from SIVA in 1977, there came a burst of productivity: the novel *The Monkey's Wrench* in 1978, another book of stories in 1981, the novel *If Not Now, When?* in 1982, the essay collection *Other People's Trades* in 1985, and finally *The Drowned and the Saved* in 1986.

DESPITE LEVI'S PROFESSIONAL success, the final chapters of Angier's book make painful reading. Levi's fame, she says, was a source of anguish for his family, particularly his wife, who was pathologically jealous of anyone or anything that took him away from home. Angier theorizes that Lucia's jealousy stemmed from her intense competition with Levi's mother. Their war of wills robbed Levi of his freedom, forcing him continually to negotiate the two women's conflicting demands. "Primo built himself a Lager," Angier quotes a cousin of Levi's as saying. After he retired, the situation worsened, as he had no excuse for contact with other people, especially women. Soon his mother's health became much worse, and he could no longer leave Turin at all.

This story is fascinating and disturbing, but it leaves many questions unanswered. Certainly many people suffer from unhappy marriages and difficult parental relationships, but rarely is ordinary life so melodramatic as this. And from other sources one can glean details that are missing from Angier's account. If Lucia Levi were truly so opposed to her husband's success, why would she celebrate with him and give him gifts when his books won prizes? Ian Thomson, the author of a biography of Levi published in England this spring but yet to appear in the United States, writes of Levi's "tender" relationship with his mother; perhaps he has missed the real story, but surely no man can live in an apartment with his mother for his entire life if he does not feel some affection for her.



The most important book about salesmanship ever written ...

Selling is Simple...

by Karl Bach only $19.95*

**But read this ad for an even better deal!*

Karl Bach was a penniless and uneducated German-Jewish immigrant. He spoke very little English and, to top it off, he had a physical impediment. Not being able to get any other job, he enlisted as a Fuller Brush salesman. Within two months, he became the most productive salesman Fuller had ever had. From a standing start, he had developed irresistible sales techniques. He applied those methods and insights to the life insurance business. Within three years, he became one of the most successful life insurance producers in the US. He founded and became principal owner of the San Francisco Life Insurance Company, which eventually merged with the Philadelphia Life Insurance Company. He became a very, very wealthy man. In this book, Karl reveals his enormously successful salesmanship methods.

If you are in any area of selling, you should be able to at least quadruple your performance by reading this groundbreaking book and following its precepts. There is no reason why you shouldn't be as successful as Karl Bach -- you have so much more going for yourself than he did. We are the publishers of this book and can offer it for only **$19.95**. ***But we have an even better deal:** ***Buy two books for $39.90 and we will send you a third one, with our compliments -- absolutely*** **FREE**! If you are in any area of sales and want to multiply your performance and your income, you owe it to yourself to buy this book. You and your family will be glad you did. Order it today!

Order directly from the publisher by toll-free phone (800) 600-2777, by fax (415) 356-7804, or by mail. Mention order code **1094Y343** and give Visa/MC # and expiration date, or send check for $19.95. Add $4.95 shipping/insurance, plus sales tax for CA delivery. 30 days refund/return, except for shipping/insurance.

advance books
division of jomira/advance
470 Third St., #211, San Francisco, CA 94107

Order by toll-free phone: (800) 600-2777 or (fastest!) by fax: (415) 356-7804
Visit our website at www.haverhills.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If the grim picture is to be believed, however, then it is hardly surprising that the frequency of Levi's depressions increased toward the end of his life. They often came at times when Levi was aware of his own fragility; he suffered from debilitating attacks of shingles, and he had "a terror of physical ailment" of any kind. A diary kept by a woman with whom (according to Angier) Levi had a long relationship, from 1974 until his death, makes for heartbreaking reading. "I have nothing more to say," he reportedly told her during a deep depression in 1982. "I don't know what to do with myself.... My novel has won three prizes, but the very thought of it makes me sick.... I want to end it. But the third floor is not high enough."

VI.

Il doppio legame, written in the last year of Levi's life, is the true revelation of Angier's book. She describes and discusses several chapters of it, all given to her—some in censored form—by two of the women with whom Levi had close relationships. Since none of the book has ever been published, it is impossible to evaluate Angier's account of it. It is thus also impossible fully to evaluate her reading of Levi's life, since so much of it is based on this manuscript. But one thing seems certain. If this book is anything like Levi's other autobiographies, the persona that he creates is just that—a deliberate construction. Just as it would be naïve to take at face value the persona of *The Periodic Table*, it is equally problematic to accept uncritically Levi's description of himself in this work—especially if, as a sequel of sorts to the chemical autobiography, it is similarly semi-fictional.

One hopes that Angier's description of the first chapter, written in January 1986, is reductionist. Levi begins with a discussion of the definitions of "volt" and "ampere." Both, he says, are like anger: a volt is "a touch of anger, rather than a great rage." (I cite Angier's paraphrase; she appears not to have been allowed to quote from the manuscript.) More important are voltage and amperage, and "the work that can be extracted from them": Levi goes on to discuss kilowatts and kilowatt-hours, other ways of measuring work. Angier calls this "a delightful start," but the "pleasure and irony" she speaks of seem to have gotten lost somewhere. The second chapter, which Levi wrote in August of that year, treats the process by which a boiled egg becomes hard: it includes a paean to the egg as well as a physical description of what happens to the egg's molecules when boiled. It also includes some suggestions about the relationship between the writer and the lady—she is not Jewish, he has known her for many years, he is in love with her.

The third and fourth chapters are the most personal. In the third the chemist talks about his "long, lonely sexual suffering": his youthful horror of genitalia, his many platonic friendships with women in which he feared touching or being touched, the schoolboy taunts of "circumcision is castration," "remaining trapped in his untouched solitude for years, overcome every so often with such despair that he thought of suicide." The fourth chapter takes depression as its main topic. Depression, he says, is "the desire for desire: though that is an illusion too, since even if [sufferers] find something reasonable to desire, and achieve it, the next moment they will be as unhappy as before." His own case, he says, has to do with the fact that success no longer satisfies him. It is (in Italian) a past participle, which means that it is always already over. It requires conferences, festivals, and other obligations, which he must continually refuse. And he is overwhelmed by letters: "every morning when the post arrives is a moment of dread." This, at least, is echoed in one of Levi's interviews. "How do you experience fame?" the interviewer asked. "In fits and starts," Levi replied. "In particular at ten o'clock in the morning, when the post arrives."

The events of April 11, 1987, Levi's last morning, are well established. A friend came to see his son, who lived next door, and they both stopped by. At half past nine Levi's wife left to go shopping. At around ten, as usual, the concierge, Jolanda Gasperi, brought up his mail. Sometime afterward, he told his mother's nurse to answer the phone if it rang, because he was going down to Gasperi's office. At around quarter after ten, Gasperi heard a thud, and discovered Levi's body.

Many have found it difficult to accept the idea of Levi's suicide, preferring the theory that he suffered a dizzy spell and fell. There appears to have been nothing alarming in the day's mail. He did not leave a suicide note. And in the last days before his death he was still making plans for the future. He was in the process of being interviewed for an authorized biography; the work had been interrupted, but on the day before his suicide he told the biographer, "We can go on now," and said to phone him back the next week. But as Ian Thomson points out, many people who commit suicide experience a sharp improvement in mood in the days just before death.

After reading Angier's account of Levi's last days, it is hard to think that his death could have been anything but suicide. While he was writing *Il doppio legame*, Levi was diagnosed with an enlarged prostate, which provoked another depression. For a few months he was treated with antidepressants, as he had been in the past, but they interfered with his prostate medication. In March, he had a prostate operation, which sent his depression spiraling out of control. Angier reports friends' accounts of anguished conversations with Levi in the days before his death, in some of which Levi was so depressed he could barely speak. She has interviewed a physical therapist who treated Levi and became his friend, who says that after she told him of her own close call with suicide, they often discussed the topic: "he talked about suicide without fear," and was "very interested in it, even fascinated by it." And if the mail reminded him of the obligations that he felt unable to meet, its arrival would have been enough to evoke his horror, even if nothing upsetting was delivered.

Despite her many conversations with Levi's friends and relatives, however, it is clear from the beginning of Angier's book that much of her conception of his depression and suicide—and of his life, since she sees depression as its basis—rests on her reading of *Il doppio legame*, which she seems to regard as the key to his psyche. This would be questionable regarding any writer, but it is all the more so with regard to Levi, who allowed his life to appear in his work only in disguise. If Angier has subjected *Il doppio legame* to the strenuous interrogation she has conducted on Levi's other works, confirming his statements through interviews with others or information about his life, it is not evident. Her reports of her interviews with Levi's two longtime lovers are brief and focus mainly on whatever she can discern about their affairs. As we have seen with his other books, when Levi changed the details of his life for his fiction, he did so to improve upon the story. For all we know, the truth behind *Il doppio legame*'s sexual intrigue is considerably more mundane. But if the fact that Levi published a book about the Holocaust before committing suicide does not mean that the Holocaust was responsible for his suicide, then the fact that Levi was writing a book about sexual repression and depression at the time of his suicide cannot imply a causal link either.

In his last interview, Levi spoke of "the difference between the writer as he appears in his books, and the man as he really is." Despite the surface transparency of Levi's books, the "man as he really is" will always remain unknowable. And this is as it should be. The contradictions of Levi's writing—the continual questioning

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of whether the prisoners are or are not men, the mixture of fiction and reality in *The Periodic Table*—are a part of what makes his work so rich. These contradictions cannot be unraveled through a posthumous psychoanalysis of Levi, no matter how empathetic or convincing. Perhaps after his wife's death Levi's private papers will be published for all to see, and Angier's theories will be confirmed or disproved. Until then, we have only his books, which all lead to a single incontrovertible conclusion, with all the paradox that it implies: this was a man. ■

The Moody Blues

By DALE PECK

The Black Veil: A Memoir With Digressions by Rick Moody

(Little, Brown, 288 pp., $24.95)

RICK MOODY IS the worst writer of his generation.

I apologize for the abruptness of this declaration, its lack of nuance, of any meaning besides the intuitive; but as I made my way through Moody's oeuvre during the past few months I was unable to come up with any other starting point for a consideration of his accomplishment. Or, more accurately, every other starting point that I tried felt disingenuous, nothing more than a way of setting Moody up in order to knock him down. One of those starting points was this: "Rick Moody is a lot of things, but he is not actually dumb." This was an attempt at charity, and though I still think that it's true enough, I don't think that it matters; at any rate, his intelligence does not make up for the badness of his books. Another attempt: "In his breakthrough novel *The Ice Storm*, Rick Moody evinces a troubling fascination with adolescent sexual organs that is partially explained in his latest book, *The Black Veil*, a so-called 'memoir with digressions.'" Again, the observation strikes me as correct. The problem here was in assuming that what most readers think of as the subject of a story has any role in a Moody project beyond giving his tangled prose something to wrap itself around, the way a vine will wrap itself around the nearest thing to hand, be it trellis, tree, or trash.

Yet another false start: "*The Black Veil* is the worst of Rick Moody's very bad books." Here the first mistake was in focusing on the books themselves, which bear the same relationship to Moody's career as his subjects do to his prose: the former come across as little more than a prop for the latter, incidental, interchangeable. Moreover, *Garden State*, Moody's first book—despite his citing "the proposition put forth by a vocal minority: that *Garden State* is my best novel"—is, in fact, even worse than *The Black Veil*; and "*The Black Veil* is the second worst of Rick Moody's very bad books" just doesn't have the same ring to it.

Stop reading here if you are looking for a calm dissection of the work of Hiram Frederick Moody III. At this point, the use of the diminutive "Rick" is about the only wise decision that I am willing to give him credit for. The plain truth is that I have stared at pages and pages of Moody's prose and they remain as meaningless to me as the Korean characters that paper the wall of a local restaurant. Actually, the comparison is not particularly apt, because I know that the Korean writing means something, but I am not convinced that Moody's books are about anything at all. In fact, it is only when I consider *The Black Veil* stripped of any pretense to content that I can ascribe it a measure of objecthood—not as the diagnostic, hermeneutical genealogy that it purports to be, but rather as the latest in what I have come to regard as a series of imitations or echoes of Moody's more talented, or at any rate more authentically individual, peers.

Seen in this light, *The Black Veil* is Moody's attempt at *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*, and *Purple America* Moody's version of *Infinite Jest*, and *The Ice Storm* his take on *The Virgin Suicides*, and *Garden State* a pastiche of various writers who published in *Between C and D*, the journal of choice for the post-punk New Narrative writers of the 1980s. No doubt Moody is even now at work on a sprawling "social novel" in the manner of *The Corrections*; and given his rate of output—six books in a decade—we can probably expect to see it in stores by the end of next year, just in time for Christmas.

Together these books amount not so much to an oeuvre as to a career, one whose success, though fascinating, is inexplicable to me. In fact, I have to confess that I consider myself unequal to the task of analyzing Moody's writing. Its faults strike me as uniform and self-evident and none of them are complex enough for a sustained analysis. My gut feeling is that if you honestly do not believe that this is bad writing, then you are a part of the problem. When I finished *The Black Veil* I scrawled "Lies! Lies! All lies!" on the cover and considered my job done. Like all of Moody's books, it is pretentious, muddled, derivative, bathetic. His much-touted compassion strikes me as false (in his fiction he makes his characters suffer in order to solicit your pity, and this seems no less true of the self that he describes in *The Black Veil*); his highly praised prose—"rhythmic" and "evocative" are the tags that you see most often—comes only at the expense of precision, which is to say, of truth.

AS MOODY'S CAREER has progressed, his books have striven to be more mythic and more postmodern and more real all at the same time; so it is perhaps not surprising that his latest endeavor is a work of hagiography masking itself as self-lacerating autobiography. *The Black Veil* asks us to consider its subject—the aforementioned Hiram Frederick Moody III, a.k.a. Rick—as a postmodern tragic hero, ironic as well as iconic, America's Battered Inner Child–cum–Messianic Storyteller. Every page practically cries out: love me despite my flaws.

Well, I don't. Perhaps this denotes a failure of empathy on my part, or an indication that I am not the intended audience for Moody's musings. But as I puzzled my way through this and the rest of Moody's books, I found myself looking not for the place in their execution or conception where they went wrong, but rather for something even prior and more primary: the wrong turn in our culture that led to Moody's status as one of the anointed ones of his—okay, our—generation. In my view, the wrong turn starts around the time Stephen Dedalus goes to college in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and echoes all the way through Don DeLillo's ponderously self-important rendering of Bobby Thompson's shot heard round the world in the opening chapter of *Underworld*. Moody's

DALE PECK is a novelist and critic. He lives in New York City.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

badness is a little less inexplicable if you look at him as the lowest common denominator of a generation of writers—and readers: they, too, bear some responsibility for the condition of fiction—who have long since forgotten what the modernist and postmodernist assaults on linearity were actually about, and as such have lost the ability to tell the difference between ambiguity and inscrutability, ambition and bombast; of writers who are taken at face value when they are being ironic and who are deemed ironic when they are telling it straight—assuming, of course, that they themselves know the difference. Assuming, I should add, that they actually have a subject.

MOODY HAS DESCRIBED his style as "a more natural albeit slightly more hysterical kind of line length." "Line length," of course, refers to poetry, not prose, but the imprecision is typical of Moody's half-thought-out rhetoric: the buzzwords here are "natural" and "hysterical," the rest are approximations, filler. "I just hit it," he went on. "I just landed the vein in a way. And I suddenly realized that it was okay for me to write these long, torrid sentences and that people would still read the work and many people would be really excited by it." The segue is revealing: Moody's criterion for his language is not that it be expressive but that it be "okay," that "people would still read the work" and "be really excited by it." As with the books themselves, what comes through here is Moody's urgent, indeed "hysterical" desire to be heard. In its defense, Moody's audience is surely not the first to be "excited" by the sweat stains under a preacher's arms rather than by the "torrid sentences" of the book he holds in his hands.

Let us take, by way of example, the opening paragraph of *The Black Veil.*

> So there's the matter of our crimes. The remembrance of our misdoings is grievous to us; the burden of them is intolerable. Lies, whispered, of friends' indiscretions; instances of envy—when we hate the people we love; peccadilloes, filched office supplies; inflated expense accounts; violent obsessions of all kinds, reckless speeding, a fender bender whose scene we left; the belt from Macy's we slipped into our own belt loops (they're the easiest thing to take); a copy of Montaigne, nineteenth century edition, never returned to the library; a kiss stolen from someone else's lover; a night out of state upon a tanned mattress when the energy of adultery seemed so persuasive that we concealed from ourselves all memory of our spouses; gifts never sent; allegiances never acknowledged; inexplicable cruelties to people with bad luck; inexplicable cruelties to friends; a waiter we upbraided that time; we cheated at cards; we cheated at tennis; we cheated at backgammon or at chess or at some board game of our childhood; we tripped that guy in the backfield and then waltzed in for the goal; we took things for granted, took privileges for rights; we demanded things in no way due us. And then with some of us there are worse crimes, crimes unspeakable, though we might write of them, like robbery, battery, or rape. We fell into coercion or abuse or full-scale embezzlement or even murder, the murder of innocents perhaps; we committed crimes of rage so that afterwards we couldn't sleep, couldn't forget, couldn't think straight, and whispered to ourselves, revisiting these instances of our transgression. There's the matter of our crimes.

Readers familiar with Moody's work will recognize in this paragraph the incantatory declarations with which he has begun all his books since *The Ice Storm.* These openings are less a setup to what follows than a contest of wills between Moody and his reader, a calculated assault by the former on the aesthetic proprieties of the latter. *The Ice Storm* declares its grandness of intent in the hyperbole of its subject matter (all of Nixonian America), whereas *Purple America* is more gestural, opening with a two- or three-thousand-word sentence riffing on John 11:26 ("whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die"). In fact, these beginnings are nothing more than transparent attempts at linguistic virtuosity: the former is just a list, the latter a series of sentences faintly echoing biblical rhythms and linked by commas rather than periods. But mostly they are superfluous, which is what finally makes them so annoying.

MOODY STARTS HIS books like a boxer talking trash before the bout, as if trying to make his opponent forget that the only thing that really matters is how hard and how well you throw your fists after the bell rings. But in reality the clash between Moody and reader is less a pugilistic competition than a pissing contest, particularly if the reader happens to be a man; and if the reader happens to be a writer, then the experience becomes even more inflammatory. For me, the beginning of a Rick Moody book is a bit like having a stranger walk up and smack me in the face, and then stand there waiting to see if I am man enough to separate him from his balls.

But not even I was prepared for the arcana that open *The Black Veil.* I have been staring at these 270 words for three or four months now, and I still find myself unable to reason them out. Every connection that I try to make leads to new disjunctions. There is the stagy and false informality of that leading "So," the conjugal insinuation of "our," the odd choice of "misdoings" rather than "misdeeds." Why? And what is that dash doing between "envy" and "when"? Though the antecedent of that parenthetical "they're" is obviously "belt," the plural leads one to think it refers to "belt loops," giving rise to an image of the author sawing off the belt loops of department-store pants. Similarly, the indefinite "a waiter" followed by the definite "that time": is he remembering a specific occasion or not? And what exactly is a "tanned mattress"?

This isn't a matter of poetic license. We are talking about Freshman Comp. Moody's passage is just wrong, grammatically, stylistically, and, most importantly, semantically. It just doesn't make sense. I mean, wasn't there a single person to point out that "the murder of innocents" is a redundancy on a par with "wet water"? Or that what this passage cries out for is in fact "matter"? Not simply the names of crimes, but their substance: details, concrete information. Describing a volume of Montaigne as a "nineteenth century edition," for example, is less a telling detail than a grab at the authority that attaches to canonical figures (in this case the very man who invented the term *essai*). Wouldn't Moody's purposes be better served if readers knew whether the stolen edition came in one or more volumes? If it was one hundred years old, or two hundred years old? If it was Florio's 1603 translation, which is practically a foreign language itself, or Hazlitt's more modern 1856 edition, or if Moody read it in French? One wants to face the writer and demand: *Que sais-tu?* What do you actually know?

Possibly the only real accomplishment of this paragraph is Moody's insinuation of a bond between himself and the reader. His "we" invokes a collective self, as though to suggest at the outset that this "memoir" is not just about Rick Moody and not just about the reader, but about the larger society of which "we" are both a part. Your inclusion in Moody's "we"—in effect, your guilt—begins the moment you begin reading *The Black Veil,* and even if you happen not to be guilty of "crimes unspeakable," some other member of the nebulous "we" into which you have been incorporated is guilty, and as such you share in his or her responsibility and blame. Or at least that's the only way I can read it.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

You deserve a factual look at...

Aid to Israel
Does the U.S. get its money's worth?

Israel and Egypt are the two largest recipients of U.S. aid. For its "participation" in the Gulf War, Egypt was forgiven its indebtedness of $9 billion. Israel pays its bills. It receives $2.8 billion every year. Of that amount, $2.0 billion is for military aid and $0.8 billion for economic aid. It's fair to ask whether this is a good deal for the American taxpayer.

What are the facts?

The only democratic country in the Middle East. Israel is the only genuinely democratic state in the Middle East. It is committed to freedom and equality, and the rule of law. It embodies the fundamental values that are in tune with those of America and that America has traditionally supported.

Israel's military and political importance in the Middle East and its strategic position stabilize the entire area, including the oil fields of the Persian Gulf. During the Cold War, it was America's indispensable rampart against the inroads and expansionist ambitions of the Soviet Union. It is now a western bulwark against the aggressive intents of Iran, Iraq, and other bellicose nations that threaten the interests of the United States. It is a most reliable partner in the promotion of Western strategic interests and in the stabilization of the Middle East. Over 20% of its budget goes for defense, compared to 7% in the U.S. and less than 1% in Japan. Israel has one of the best armies in the world. Its navy and air force are the major deterrent forces in the eastern Mediterranean.

Israel effectively secures NATO's southeastern flank, without having a single American soldier stationed in its territory. Still, the superb military installations, the air and sea lift capabilities, the equipment and food storage capacity, and the trained manpower to maintain and repair sophisticated U.S. equipment are instantly at hand in Israel. It is the only country in the area that makes itself available to the United States, in any contingency.

Only fraction of aid stays in Israel. There is no other country in the Middle East except Israel that can be considered to have a stable government or populace friendly to the United States. There is much danger that any military aid to Arab countries, and military equipment given or sold to them, will suffer the same fate as the untold billions of dollars and priceless military secrets that were lost to our enemies in the debacle of Iran. Is Saudi Arabia more stable? Egypt? Jordan? Kuwait? Judge for yourself!

> "American aid to Israel is a two-way street. Aid to Israel is America's greatest defense bargain."

Only a fraction of the aid given stays in Israel. By far the largest share remains with American defense contractors. Peter McPherson, former administrator of the Agency for International Development, estimated that every billion dollars of aid to Israel creates 60,000 to 70,000 jobs in the United States.

Compared to the $2.0 billion yearly military aid to Israel, the U.S. contributes more than $130 billion(!) every year to the defense of Europe and more than $30 billion to the defense of Japan, Korea, and the Far East. Over 300,000 U.S. troops are stationed with NATO and over 30,000 U.S. troops in the Far East. In contrast, not one single U.S. soldier needs to be stationed and put at risk in Israel. U.S. military analysts estimate that the U.S. would have to spend the equivalent of $150 billion a year in the Middle East to maintain a force equivalent to Israel's.

There are many other benefits that the U.S. military derives from Israel. Israel is the only country that has gained battlefield experience with U.S. weapons. This experience is immediately conveyed to the U.S. Enormous quantities of captured Soviet weapons and defense systems were turned over to the U.S. military for analysis. Israel, in the light of its experience, continually modifies U.S. weapons systems. For instance, Israeli scientists have made over 200 improvements in the F-15 alone and similar improvements, mostly in avionics, in later-generation planes. It would be more in line with reality if military aid to Israel were classified as part of the defense budget, rather than as "aid". Israel is truly America's unsinkable aircraft carrier in the Middle East. Former President Reagan put it well: "The fall of Iran has increased Israel's value as perhaps the only remaining strategic asset in the region on which the United States can fully rely." American aid to Israel is a two-way street. Aid to Israel is America's greatest defense bargain.

This ad has been published and paid for by

FLAME

Facts and Logic About the Middle East
P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco,CA 94159
Gerardo Joffe, President

FLAME is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational 501(c)(3) organization. Its purpose is the research and publication of the facts regarding developments in the Middle East and exposing false propaganda that might harm the interests of the United States and its allies in that area of the world.Your tax-deductible contributions are welcome. They enable us to pursue these goals and to publish these messages in national newspapers and magazines. We have virtually no overhead. Almost all of our revenue pays for our educational work, for these clarifying messages, and for related direct mail.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

No real characters emerge in the three hundred pages that follow this paragraph. Rather, those pages are filled by Moody's singular-yet-shared consciousness, half object, half subject, like the shadow of a finger in front of a camera lens. There *is* a more or less straightforward narrative—two narratives, actually: the story of Moody's depression, addiction, and recovery; and a genealogical investigation of the Moody family's long and singularly undramatic tenure in New England; but these two stories proceed less by scenes than by riffs, stale tableaux that could probably be broken down into, say, twelve steps or so, but which are mainly there to set the stage for pages upon pages of banal yet apparently heartfelt hyperbole. Still, as near as I can parse it, the underlying premise of this book—the reason why we're muddling through such I'm-being-ironic-or-am-I? questions as "How many pages can you read of the very philosophy from which you, contemporary American, emerged, before you yawn and reach for the antithetical comforts, for the remote control, for the beer in its Styrofoam sleeve, for the joint that goes around?"—is that Moody, who suffered from clinical depression and alcoholism into his twenties (he is sober now, fortysomething, and apparently happy), came to see his condition as nothing less than the "genetic" "inheritance" of his patrilineal line, in particular one Joseph "Handkerchief" Moody, a late-eighteenth-century New England minister who might—although he might not—have been the inspiration for Nathaniel Hawthorne's short story "The Minister's Black Veil."

NOW, THIS STORY and his ancestral link to it seem particularly important to Moody. The third chapter of his book is devoted to a Lit Crit 101 reading of the text, quotations from which appear regularly throughout his memoir, and the story in its entirety shows up as an appendix, a borrowing almost but not quite as pretentious as Jeanette Winterson's use of a dozen pages from the score of *Der Rosenkavalier* as a coda to her novel *Art and Lies*. In a prefatory footnote to his story, Hawthorne mentions that Handkerchief Moody "made himself remarkable by the same eccentricity that is here related." That is, he wore a veil in daily life. "In [Handkerchief Moody's] case, however, the symbol has a different import. In early life he had accidentally killed a beloved friend; and from that day till the hour of his own death, he hid his face from men." In Hawthorne's story, Parson Hooper's reason for donning the veil is never revealed, and is the subject of much speculation among his fellow villagers. Moody, ignoring Hawthorne's admonition that "the symbol has a different import," takes the veil as an indication of a crime that Hooper is concealing, a crime he shares with his fellow Puritans, both fictional and real—with Handkerchief Moody, our present-day Moody, and "you, contemporary American," since in Moody's conception all of contemporary America "emerged" from "the very philosophy" of the Puritans.

The connection, "genetic," "symbolic," or otherwise, between Rick Moody's and Handkerchief Moody's morbidity strikes me as rather tenuous—especially after you find out they are probably not even related; but the gist of the idea seems to be that Moody's depression was a scrim that simultaneously concealed and pointed up some secret sin committed by not just him and not just Handkerchief Moody and the other males in his family line, but by, in ever-widening circles of implication, all Americans, contemporary or otherwise, and if I follow his reasoning, which can be difficult since it proceeds primarily by rhythm and evocation rather than logic, then this book is meant to tell us what that sin is. By the time I finished reading it, I was convinced the book was itself the sin.

"To be an American," Moody writes in one of the few syntactically lucid sentences in the book, "to be a citizen of the West, is to be a murderer." The syntax is clear, the semantics less so. Moody's American murderers seem to be guilty of the crimes that have obsessed the politically correct for the past couple of decades: the assumption of heterosexual privilege (at the depth of his depression Moody's constant fear was that he "*was going to be raped*"); the innate violence of masculinity ("I think of all *dead girls* expunged by philosophies and theologies of the masculine"); and of course the theft of this continent from the Indians ("the black scar of Manifest Destiny, the recollection of which should cause aggravated insomnia in all North American adults"). It is sort of refreshing, I guess, to see a straight white male taking a hard p.c. line, but Moody's absolutist construction ("to be an American," "to be a citizen of the West," "to be a murderer") betrays an unacknowledged and contradictory division. For example: "the brutality visited upon those who preceded us here" is what Moody writes in ostensible reference to the invasion of the Americas by Europe. But both "those" and "us" lack clear antecedents, and as such the latter hearkens back to the "us"'s and "we"'s and "our"'s of *The Black Veil*'s opening incantation. "We" are not merely Americans, it turns out, "we" are also straight and white and male, since these are the attributes of power and thus of victimizing; and our victims—"those" who are not "us," who are not straight and white and male—are, as a matter of definition, not American. They make up a separate nation.

I DO NOT mean to say that Moody is racist, sexist, or homophobic. I mean to say only that he is a bad writer. But bad writing has consequences. *The Black Veil* isn't simply a bad idea badly rendered. It is so awful that it is easy to see the book as in league with the very crimes that it seeks to redress. Here, as in the books that preceded it, the language that Moody employs is so fundamentally imprecise that it cannot help but tell untruths. There is the innocuous generality: "First, the guest room, with the orderly neglect of all guest rooms" (*The Ice Storm*). There is the demotion of the physical world in favor of the fancy conceit: "Rail lines marked the perimeters of Haledon, this isosceles triangle in the flat Eastern part of the Garden State. Freight trains ran through it like blood cells, carrying unpronounceable compounds and toxins. They rumbled past the accidents at crossing gates, past the crime scenes and late-night waste burials" (*Garden State*). The metaphor works fine here. What does not work is the description. At the end of the passage, our only image of Haledon, New Jersey—of the "accidents" and "crime scenes" and "waste burials"—remains an outline, unfilled by the metaphor it contains.

There is a certain poignancy to these stereotypical generalities and slipshod metaphors: they speak of the difficulty of individual expression, of the homogenization and the simplification of life by the very tools that seek to understand its complexity. But they lack depth: Moody's meta-descriptions never show individuality in the process of being squashed—or, for that matter, of finding a way to express itself; and this, besides being dramatically uninteresting, is not an accurate reflection of the world that he is describing. The war may indeed be lost, but that does not mean that the battle is over, that individual soldiers don't continue to fight and lose (and fight and win) the occasional skirmish.

And then there's this:

> Jen packed up for her rehabilitation center, in Armonk, which had a pastoral name. Tired of being henpecked by her aunts, I thought; grief-stricken about her mother, desiring of good relations with the remaining women of her tribe. The last weeks before her leaving were such a wreck that I thought, in a spate of intuitive reasoning, that it was *good* to get her out of the house, because she was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

getting *really bad*, and I didn't want her looking at me in my disgrace, and all we did was sleep and drink, so it was fine. She got in the car with the rebuilt front end, packed up some practical outfits, took off. I misunderstood what a precarious moment it was, as Handkerchief Moody must have felt calling for a midwife on the eve of the birth of his daughter Lucy. Once Jen was out of the house, I slumped further into the cave-dwelling part of my back brain. The lonely villain in a monster movie, a suzerain of reclusion, drinking, loathing myself, going out and feeling afraid, cynical, contemptuous, literally disgusted by *my own shadow*, by everything that had to do with me, by my borders and everything contained within my borders, the trouble I had wrought, everything I'd gotten into, while the streets around me were *full of riots of sexual assault*, women of leisure and men of leisure and men of leisure dressed as women, underneath the punctilious exterior of the society in which I had been raised, libertine cravings, the unquenchable urges toward excess of carnal delight, everywhere bawds and adulterers, pedophiles and bestialists, lovers of incest and masochism, all institutions of the civilized America were window-dressing for the excursion of sexual power into the ghetto of the powerless, a sequence of rapes, Manifest Destiny as the rationalization of genocide by method of rape, the Republican Party as rationalization of genocide, Fundamentalist Christianity as rationalization of genocide, every kind word uttered to another libertine was the means by which sodomy would be exercised....

Here, as in the memoir's opening paragraph—as in virtually every paragraph of this book—is patently specious psychological and symbolic amplification of a kind that I haven't seen since the last time I dipped into some of Freud's wackier case studies. But Freud was famously willing to admit that sometimes a cigar is just a cigar, whereas Moody's free-associative mind—elsewhere he makes reference to a "virus of language," which seems particularly useful as a description of his own sentence style—simply cannot let things be what they are. There are any number of problems with this book, but in the end it always comes back to the prose. A writer's words, more than his narratives, characters, and themes, are the closest we have to a blueprint of his vision, and in Rick Moody's words there is a single striking consistency. You could call it an ever-widening gap between signifier and signified, or you could call it lies. Or you could just call it what it is, which is bullshit.

And yet there is that urgency I mentioned before, the hysterical desire to be heard. For all its shrillness, Moody's volume strikes me as something more than the antics of a child needing attention. I say this as a fellow novelist: though he has never put together a single sentence that I would call indispensable, there is a true empathetic undercurrent in Moody's work. I find the same current in the work of David Foster Wallace and Jeffrey Eugenides and Colson Whitehead, but not in the work of Richard Powers and Dave Eggers and Donald Antrim and Jonathan Franzen and Jonathan Lethem. I find it in Thomas Pynchon but not in Don DeLillo, here and there in John Barth and Donald Barthelme but almost entirely absent in John Fowles and John Hawkes and William Gaddis, in *Lolita* but not in *Pale Fire*, in the early Joyce, the first one and a half books, but not in the last two and a half books.

Together, these writers represent the most esoteric strain of twentieth-century literature, what some people think of as the highest of high canonical postmodernism, and what I, with all due respect to Colson Whitehead, prefer to think of as the white man's ivory tower. The novelist Jim Lewis (he shows up in *The Black Veil* under the pseudonym "Irv") prefers the term Geek Lit, but I think that a venereal designation is unavoidable in discussing literature's secret school, the Skull and Bones of the novelist's set. These boys have their own little club going, and like all clubs it is defined as much by its gatecrashers as by its blue-blood members. The fact that critics obsess over a black writer such as Whitehead writing in a postmodern pop idiom only serves to reinforce the idea that there is something de facto segregational about the style that he has chosen as his own.

Again, this is not meant to malign the aforementioned writers. I don't want to suggest that they are uniformly talentless or misguided; or that there is a conspiracy among them, or among them and the editors of *The New Yorker* or *Harper's* or *The Paris Review*; or that they invest any of their energy in excluding others from the upper echelons of the literary world. All I'm suggesting is that these writers (and their editors) see themselves as the heirs to a bankrupt tradition. A tradition that began with the diarrheic flow of words that is *Ulysses*; continued on through the incomprehensible ramblings of late Faulkner and the sterile inventions of Nabokov; and then burst into full, foul life in the ridiculous dithering of Barth and Hawkes and Gaddis, and the reductive cardboard constructions of Barthelme, and the word-by-word wasting of a talent as formidable as Pynchon's; and finally broke apart like a cracked sidewalk beneath the weight of the stupid—just plain stupid—tomes of DeLillo.

This is a tradition that has systematically divested itself of any ability to comment on anything other than its own inability to comment on anything, a malaise that only David Foster Wallace has the good sense to lament. It is a tradition that has turned the construction of a novel into a purely formal exercise, judged either by the inscrutable floribundity of its prose or the lifeless carpentry of its parts, rather than by the quasi-mystical animating aspect of literature that even a rational Englishman such as Forster called "prophecy." And this is a shame, because I think Rick Moody, alone among his self-selecting generation, has something to say and the means with which to say it, something that might actually meet Forster's criterion if it were developed in an artful, thoughtful manner: Rick Moody is sad.

I can think of no more urgent reason to write books today than out of an overwhelming sense of despair at the state of the world. It is also the most urgent reason to write book reviews. When I wrote my last review for this magazine, anthrax was traveling through the U.S. Postal Service and smart bombs were decimating Afghanistan; now we are waiting to find out if Pakistan and India are going to fight the first tactical nuclear war. Global warming, overpopulation, the worldwide AIDS epidemic, the ever-increasing distance between supposedly democratic governments and their electorates, the decimation of culture after culture by the relentless spread of the Disneyfied garbage of the American entertainment complex, and the incredibly sad, horrible, hopelessness-inducing fact that people still cannot say what they really mean to each other after seven or so millennia of human civilization: life really sucks right now. I am not claiming things are any worse than they have ever been, merely that there is genuine cause for sadness, and no writer strikes me as more despondent about the state of the world than Rick Moody.

That he hides his despondency behind literary bravura and posturing is itself a cause for sadness; but I still believe that Moody could write well if he wanted to. He has a true writer's sensibility. His stories have the heft and shape of cultural narratives. There was even a moment at the end of *The Ice Storm* when my heart went out to him. The utter sorrow that infused every word was real ("His cry emerged, long and hoarse and elastic and then muted, choked off"), even as it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seemed independent of the simple story it told and the sugarcoated moral it poured on top ("Elena knew that apology was the impossible paragraph, its words were like the secret names of God"). That sadness is oddly muted in *The Black Veil*. One feels less connection to the writer as he details his real neurosis than when he is detailing the tribulations of his fictional Hood family. In part that distancing is a result of Moody's ever-deteriorating prose, in part his unwillingness to own his feelings, preferring instead to blame someone else—his ancestors, society, or (this is my theory) metaphor. Moody's virus is not so much of language as of language's need to resort to comparison in order to represent intangible things such as thoughts, emotions, the divine. Though he pretends that these comparisons bring him closer to what he is trying to describe, something—his pen, or his subconscious—knows that in fact he is wandering further and further from the truth, which is why the Rick Moody conjured in the pages of *The Black Veil* feels even more artificial than the people who inhabit his fiction.

Rick Moody, his very own creation, his very own exemplary American, cannot lift his own veil of projection and see that Parson Hooper's veil "has a different import" from the one worn by Handkerchief Moody. Hawthorne specifically says the veil is *not* a symbol of a crime—a fact that Moody ignores, and in doing so he ignores the fact that Hawthorne was interested in man's nature rather than in his actions, a narrative chain of cause and effect based not on an individual's history but on the history of the species. In a post-Freudian age, it is understandable that we should interpret Hawthorne's fascination with external markings—the black veil, the scarlet letter, the birthmark—in a psychological context, but that is anachronistic and simplistic. The notion that human beings commit crimes isn't exactly interesting, let alone revelatory. About the only thing that Moody's belief that people ought to wear their guilt like a brand tells us is that he has not, in fact, escaped the legacy of his ancestors, genetic or otherwise. Ultimately, *The Black Veil* is less an explication of an American crime or American guilt (of either the criminal or psychological variety) than of a particular American need to assign blame or to refuse it. Rick Moody is a Puritan, pure and simple, his memoir nothing more than a witch-hunt. But his culprit, he would see if he pulled the wool from his own eyes, is himself.

And now I'll tell you *my* truth: I went into this review thinking that Moody was a faker, a poser. Shooting him off his plinth, I thought, would be easier than shooting fish in a barrel. But whatever else he is, he is the genuine article. A writer of one terrible book after another, but a writer nonetheless. If you want to know the difference between a real writer and all those wannabes who punish us with their memoirs and literary novels, it's this: the real writer is incapable of seeing the world through anything but the prism of metaphor and narrative, which renders that world as falsely as chronology renders the progress of time. The real writer suspects that character is just a by-product of these two forces—that what we think of as ourselves is nothing more than an assortment of chemicals acted upon by internal and external stimuli—and in some ways it is his urgent need to disprove this hypothesis, to assert at least the possibility of an existence independent of fate, that drives him to write fiction. It's true, it's true, what you have always suspected is true: it's ourselves we blame, ourselves we're trying to save. Not you.

All of which may be just a long way of saying that I hate Rick Moody's books, but there is always a moment in each one of them when I get mad at myself for hating them.

And then, alas, the moment passes. ■

Not So Fast

By Hillel Halkin

Elvis in Jerusalem: Post-Zionism and the Americanization of Israel by Tom Segev translated by Haim Watzman

(Metropolitan Books, 167 pp., $23)

An uncle of mine, the Hebrew poet Simon Halkin, once made a remark to me that I found memorable. "Zionism," he said, "was the only straight idea ever to have passed through the mind of the Jewish people. But when something straight passes through something crooked, it comes out crooked, too." These are crooked times for Israel and for the Jews. The temptation to conclude from them that Zionism was a crooked notion is, in some circles, growing. Zionism needs to be defended against its benders and twisters.

Tom Segev, a journalist and a historian who has published books on the British Mandate period in Palestine, the Holocaust, and the early years of Israeli statehood, is one of these. Though more judicious than some, he belongs to a group of Israeli thinkers and academics—known sometimes as "the post-Zionists," sometimes as "the new historians," and sometimes as the intellectual voice of the ultra-Labor Party left—who have been arguing for years that Zionism was, if not an outright mistake, a misguided movement based on myths. Segev's new book is his first to explore this thesis frontally. It is, though slighter in volume, a more comprehensive statement of his views than his previous works, whose anecdotal style it shares. (Its title refers to a new "Elvis Presley Diner" outside Jerusalem, its "glistening white, mythological, larger-than-life effigy of the singer" symbolizing, for Segev, American culture's grip on Israeli life.)

Segev enumerates five main Zionist "myths":

1. Zionism claimed, in the years in which it was struggling to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine, to speak for the needs and the desires of the world's Jews and to be able to mobilize them. And yet in actual fact most of the world's Jews opposed it or were indifferent to it. "Contrary to the prevailing wisdom in Israel today," Segev writes, "the Zionist movement's principal opponents were Jews. The movement did not succeed in convincing most of the Jewish people that it was viable." Furthermore, "Most Jews who settled in Israel did not do so because they were Zionists. They came as refugees ... reluctantly."

2. Even had it established a Jewish state in Palestine sooner, Zionism could never have solved the Jewish problem as it aspired to solve it. On the contrary: the worse this problem became in the Hitler years, the more helpless the Zionist movement was revealed to be. The severe Brit-

Hillel Halkin's new book, *Across the Sabbath River: In Search of a Lost Tribe of Israel*, will be published by Houghton Mifflin in August.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ish restrictions on Jewish immigration to Palestine in the 1930s merely hid the fact that the country could not economically have absorbed large numbers of European Jews anyway. Hence a Jewish state in these years could not have prevented the Holocaust. Indeed, the "tragedy of Zionism" was that, "while it may have foreseen the catastrophe, the solution it offered was irrelevant.... The Zionists certainly could not have rescued millions."

3. Israel did not rescue those who reached its shores after the Holocaust either. The million Jews from Arab lands who flocked to it after 1948 were not the beneficiaries of Zionism but its victims. Indeed, it was Zionism's conflict with the Muslim world that forced them to flee their homes. "At this point in its history [too]," Segev argues, "the Zionist movement did not serve as a solution to the Jewish problem. On the contrary, it led to the uprooting of entire Jewish communities."

4. Both culturally and economically, Israel has failed utterly to fulfill Zionism's dreams for Jewish independence. Culturally, it has been totally Americanized while at the same time becoming "more [religiously] Jewish," so that the Zionist vision of a vibrant Hebrew society, secular yet firmly rooted in the Jewish past, has come to naught. Economically, Israel is so dependent on American aid as to have become "much like the old, pre-Zionist Jewish community in the Holy Land, which also lived off charity from the United States." The Zionist project of deurbanizing the Jewish people and returning them to the land has also ended in failure, for whereas "in the mid-1950s, 16 percent of Israelis worked in agriculture, in the mid-1990s only 3 percent did." The new Jew that the Zionist revolution proudly boasted of creating has turned out to be nothing more than a Hebrew-speaking version of any Jew.

5. The most central of all Zionist narratives, the hallowed one according to which Zionism was not a colonial movement but a saga of an ancient people returning to its biblical land, has foundered, too, on the hard rock of modern science. The Bible itself can now be viewed as a mythical document with no basis in historical reality. Segev quotes with approval the Tel Aviv professor of archaeology Ze'ev Herzog, who writes: "Biblical historiography was one of the foundation stones in the construction of Israeli Jewish society's national identity.... Challenging the reliability of the Biblical accounts is [therefore] shattering the myth of the nation."

In a nutshell, the Jewish state has not delivered on a single one of Zionism's main promises. Segev does not insist, as do some of the more radical "new historians," that Israel was "born in sin" because it was built on the ruin of the Palestinians. In this book, he generally steers clear of the Arab- and Palestinian-Israeli conflicts, which he views more as the tragic clash of two nationalisms than as the premeditated dispossession by one of the other. (He is enough a man of the hard left, however, to assert that "as a statesman [Ehud] Barak failed [at Camp David and Taba] because he tried to force the Palestinians to accept a peace of surrender.") And yet if Segev is right, Israel is something worse than sinful. It is quite simply unnecessary, an incalculable waste of energy, money, sacrifice, and blood that has increased the sum total of human suffering while luring the Jewish people down a side alley of history to create a redundant copy of America in the Middle East.

BUT SEGEV IS not right. The myths are, without exception, not Zionism's myths, but his own. Consider his first proposition. There is no way, of course, to determine exactly what percentage of the world's Jewish population, in the four decades between the first Zionist Congress in 1897 and the outbreak of World War II in 1939, supported Zionism, and what percentage opposed it, and what percentage was ambivalent or indifferent to it. Moreover, among Ashkenazi Jews, who prior to the Holocaust accounted for nine-tenths of world Jewry, these percentages varied greatly from country to country: Zionism was strongest in Eastern Europe, where Jewish populations were the largest, the poorest, the least assimilated, and the most threatened by anti-Semitism; and it declined as one moved westward to Central Europe, and beyond that to France, Britain, and the United States. From its inception, political Zionism was mainly oriented toward Russian and Polish Jewry. Zionism counted most upon the backing of these Jews because it was their plight that the movement most hoped to relieve through emigration to Palestine. One of Theodor Herzl's cardinal moments of illumination came when, a totally Westernized Jew himself, he realized that his real constituency lay in the East.

And it is for the East that we have the best statistics, largely because, in post-World War I Poland and Lithuania, where three million Jews or more than 15 percent of the world's Jewish population lived, ethnic-minority political parties—German, Jewish, Ukrainian, and Belorussian—participated in national, local, and communal elections. In nearly all of these elections, the Zionists were the strongest Jewish electoral force. In the balloting for the first Sejm in Poland in 1919, they polled 52 percent of the 400,000 votes cast for Jewish parties. In the Lithuanian elections for the first national Assembly of Jewish Councils in 1920, Zionist lists won 61 seats, religious lists won 54, and socialist lists won 23. Although Zionism certainly did not succeed in mobilizing all the world's Jews, it did impressively well in those places that were crucial to it.

It is true that in the course of the 1920s and 1930s Zionist electoral strength in Eastern Europe dropped. In community council elections held in Warsaw in 1936, for example, Zionist parties, while still winning a plurality, garnered only 30 percent of the vote. But the main reason for this poorer showing was that harsh British immigration quotas in Palestine, in gross violation of the Balfour Declaration, were undercutting the Zionist program. What good was Zionism if Palestine was out of bounds for Jews clamoring to emigrate? The "tragedy of Zionism" was not that it was irrelevant, but that it was betrayed by England at the very moment in history that it had become more relevant than ever.

Which brings us to Segev's second point. Is it correct to say that a Jewish state in Palestine in the 1930s, its gates open to any Jew wishing to enter them, could not have "rescued millions"? It is hard to see on what this assumption is based. Although Segev is right that such a state could not have provided millions of jobs and livelihoods overnight, jobs and livelihoods, which are important considerations for ordinary emigrants, are trivial for desperate ones. The tens of millions of Hindus and Muslims who fled India and Pakistan in 1947–1948, the Tutsis who escaped to Congo in 1996, or the Kosovars who poured into Macedonia in 1999 were not especially concerned with earning their livelihoods. They were concerned with saving their lives. European Jews had similar instincts.

Segev might retort that, by the time Jews were desperate enough to go anywhere, even if this meant living in tents and standing on breadlines, World War II was upon them and the exits from Europe were closed. But this is at best a partial truth. Hundreds of thousands of Jews, particularly in Germany and Poland, were frantic to get out before the war; more than a million more lived in countries such as Vichy France, Italy, Romania, and Hungary that were not occupied by the Germans until late in the war, and whose governments, although pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic, were not extermination-ist toward the Jews, whom they would gladly have let go to any place willing to have them.

Unfortunately, in the years between 1939 and 1945, there was no such place. Had one existed in the form of a Jewish

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

state in Palestine, large numbers most certainly could have been saved. Moreover, it is hardly a criticism of Zionism to point out that many of these people would have come to such a state, as many Jews did later, as refugees rather than as Zionists. After all, it was a classical Zionist contention that Jews would be forced by objective circumstances to emigrate to Palestine, whether they originally wished to or not. And had Hitler had the option of dumping millions of European Jews in Palestine rather than murdering them, as there was talk of doing at one point in Madagascar, who can swear that he might not have chosen it? While perhaps unable to prevent the Holocaust, even a territorially truncated Jewish state, such as that proposed by the British Peel Commission in 1936 and adamantly opposed by the Arabs, might have significantly mitigated the Holocaust's consequences.

Even wider of the mark is Segev's thesis regarding the Jews of the Arab lands who emigrated to Israel in the late 1940s and 1950s. No one can disagree that the panicked nature of this emigration was a response to anti-Jewish agitation and violence triggered by the Palestine conflict and Israel's victory in its war of independence in 1948. It is absurd, however, to believe that, had such violence not broken out, the Jewishly traditional communities of Iraq, Yemen, Egypt, Syria, Libya, Algeria, and Tunisia would have preferred living as second-class citizens (always the lot of Jews in Muslim lands apart from the brief interregnum of Western colonialism), under dictatorial and economically backward Arab regimes, when they were welcome in a democratic and dynamic Jewish state. Morocco is a case in point. The one Arab country in which an appreciable number of Jews remained until the mid-1960s, it has almost no Jews left today, not because those who stayed on felt physically threatened, but because they were eventually attracted to greater affluence and freedom elsewhere.

All for One

Why is it my mind won't leave me alone?
All day it sits on the arm of the chair
plucking grey hairs like thoughts out of my skull,
flicking my ear with a *Duralon* comb.

Evenings when I need to work, get things done;
nine o'clock, my mind stands with its coat on
in the hall. Sod it. We drive to the pub,
it drinks, so yours truly has to drive home.

I leave at sunrise in the four-wheel drive—
my mind rides shotgun on the running board,
taps on the window of my log-cabin,
wants to find people and go night-clubbing.

Social call—my mind has to tag along.
Hangs off at first, plays it cool, smiles its smile;
next minute—launches into song. Then what:
only cops off with the belle of the belle

of the ball—that's all. Main man. Life and soul.
Makes hand-shadows on the living-room wall.
Recites *Albert and the Lion*, in French,
stood on its head drinking a yard of ale.

Next morning over paracetamol and toast
my mind weeps crocodile tears of remorse
onto the tablecloth. *Can't we be close?*
I look my mind square in the face and scream.

mind, find your own family and friends to love;
mind, open your own high-interest account;
offer yourself the exploding cigar;
put whoopee-cushions under your own arse.

It's a joke. I flounce out through the front door;
my mind in its slippers and dressing gown
runs to the garden and catches my sleeve,
says what it's said a hundred times before.

From a distance it must look a strange sight:
two men of identical shape, at odds
at first, then joined by an outstretched arm, one
leading the other back to his own home.

Simon Armitage

ONE WOULD NEVER know from *Elvis in Jerusalem* that Israel—a hopeless charity case, according to Segev—is, despite a current economic downturn largely caused by the Palestinian intifada, one of the world's twenty-five most affluent societies as ranked by standard of living, per capita income, and productivity, infant mortality and longevity rates, and overall quality of life. Nor would one know that it boasts, after the United States, the world's highest number of annual high-tech start-ups (in which many billions of dollars of foreign venture capital have been invested, often with spectacular returns). Moreover, as its economy has grown and American aid has not, Israel has become progressively less dependent on the latter, which today forms a tiny fraction of its gross national product and could easily be—American military assistance excepted—dispensed with. Far from a story of failure, Israel's development in fifty years from an insolvent postcolonial state with few natural resources to an international technological power has been, under conditions of economic siege and intermittent warfare, a remarkable tale of success.

Nor could Israel have reached this level of development without a high degree of "Americanization." Here it is not so much Segev's facts that are incorrect—with its many shopping malls, sprawling commuter suburbs, and television and computer culture, today's Israel is indeed much more like America than it once was—as it is his analysis of them. Indeed, Segev simply ignores two of the three obvious dimensions in which these facts need to be viewed. The first is that, far from being peculiarly Israeli, "Americanization" is a universal trend. (Has Segev not heard of globalization?) The second is that this trend, if thought of in terms not of Big Macs and rap music but of the constantly accelerating symbiosis of corporate capitalism and scientific technology, would exist even if America did not exist. In many respects, the "Americanization" of Israel (including the attainment of once undreamed-of agricultural efficiencies that have drastically reduced farming populations all over the world) could just as well be called its Europeanization, its Japanization, or simply its modernization.

The threat posed to native cultures by modernization is similar everywhere. Since its impact has been greater on the lives of nonreligious Israelis than on the lives of religious ones, Israel has indeed become "more Jewish" and less secularly "Israeli." But although this has led—as elsewhere—to much soul-searching about national identity, it represents no lack of foresight on the part of Zionism, which aspired precisely to a situation in which Jews would face the same problems, and within the same framework of the nation-state, as other peoples face.

There is, it is true, a special bond between Israel and the United States. It is one that Israelis feel, and are grateful for, today more than ever because of strong American political support at a time when Europe has turned against them. This bond is composed of many strands: America's large and politically active Jewish population; the fact that the two countries

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

share an immigrant history that has led to a high degree of social egalitarianism and little in the way of class structure or distinctions; a restless dynamism and dissatisfaction with letting things stay as they are that is indigenous to both societies; and still other things. One of them is religion, a powerful force in the life of Christian America and Jewish Israel, but not in that of post-Christian Europe. Few Europeans, as opposed to many Americans and Israelis, take the biblical roots of modern Israel seriously.

Segev seems to think that biblical history has been debunked as a foundation upon which Jews can build a national identity. It is too bad that he is not better acquainted with the archaeological literature on the subject, which shows the "biblical minimalists" like Herzog to belong to a small but lately very vocal group that has on the whole been getting the worse of the debate with its opponents. If some biblical accounts, such as the stories of the Patriarchs, or of the exodus from Egypt, have not been corroborated by archaeology, and probably never can or will be corroborated, many others have proven to have a factual basis. At bottom, the notion that the Jewish people did not have a real biblical past in the historic land of Israel is today more a tool of anti-Israel propaganda than a proposition taken seriously by responsible scholars. It certainly has "shattered" no Zionist "myths." Zionism remains in this respect what it was and always purported to be: the extraordinary adventure of a people that, doing what no people ever did before, sought to save itself from extinction by returning to live an independent life in the home it grew up in and from which it was dispersed long ago.

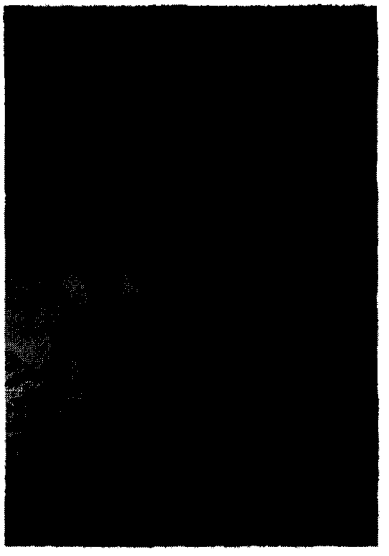
WHY ARE SO many Israeli intellectuals, like Tom Segev, blind to this adventure? Why are they unmoved by it? What makes them feel that they are living in a provincial satrapy embroiled in pointless neighborhood quarrels rather than in the stupendous human drama that Israel represents?

The answer, I think, is that for decades now Israel has been living in a growing state of cognitive dissonance. For the first half of the twentieth century, Zionism was in harmony with the rest of the Western world. This was a time of great collective movements and struggles—nationalism, socialism, communism, fascism, anti-colonialism, two terrible wars in which the world's democracies fought together—of which Zionism was one, and was also often associated with some of the others. The necessary allegiance of the individual to something greater than himself was an axiom of the ideological age. Although Zionism did not lack its intellectual enemies—many of them, as Segev rightly points out, were Jews—it was part and parcel of the spirit of its time.

This spirit began to wane in the 1950s, and it was dead by the mid-1970s. All the great "isms" of twentieth-century history now seem as distant as white gloves and gray fedoras. Collective allegiances have gone out of style, in Paris as in New York, in Moscow as in London. Even after September 11, European and American societies function well without them. Indeed, in an age of consumer capitalism they function even better without them. There is only one small corner of the Western world in which such allegiances are still needed for survival. If they erode there too, as they show worrisome signs of doing, Israel may one day lack the will to defend itself against enemies who do not belong to the Western world.

One feels in the writing of an Israeli intellectual such as Segev the (probably unconscious) preparation for that day. This is where the cognitive dissonance comes in. To say that "Israel is a special and wondrous achievement for which I am no longer willing to bear my share of the burden" is a difficult, if honest, thing to do. It is easier to write a book saying, "Israel? A poor man's America on the Mediterranean! It will be sad if it goes under—after all, it too has a right to live—but the Jewish people, let alone the rest of humanity, will manage quite nicely without it. It's certainly nothing that a Western intellectual like myself would let himself be *pushed back into the Zionist womb* for." The words that I have italicized are taken from Segev's book.

About one thing Segev is right. Not only is Israel, as he would like it to be, a part of Western civilization, but it cannot survive unless it adheres to the ways of the West: individual freedom, human rights, rational thought, scientific inquiry, technological innovation, economic opportunity. These alone are the things that give it a competitive edge over the Arabs. Yet they also place it in a paradoxical position. For the same Western world to whose basic values Israel must cling if it is to stand a fighting chance has spawned other values that threaten to sap its will to fight. The "Americanization" that can safeguard Israel the most is not the one that Segev has in mind. It is to be found in the fact that, of all the world's free countries, Israel and America alone still stand today for an idea—and that this idea, although it is not the same in each case, holds in both cases that history has tasks for peoples that it is their responsibility to shoulder. Whether this task, in the case of the Jewish people, is called Zionism or something else is not important. What matters is that it not be shirked. ■



Beau Mitchell
Stone Child College / GPA: 3.41
Major: Environmental Science
Goal: Scholarship, Give something back

American Indian College Fund
Educating the mind and spirit

Please call 1-800-776-FUND
or visit www.collegefund.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FLORENCE DIARIST

Fair Ball

ITALY'S A WONDERFUL PLACE TO honeymoon. Every city has plush hotels with vistas. Every restaurant has extraordinary cuisine. And every television in every bar has soccer. On my just-completed Italian honeymoon, I watched approximately 30 of the 48 first-round matches of the World Cup. My wife and I coordinated our visits to vineyards and duomos so we could catch essential games like Paraguay versus South Africa. At night in bed, we turned the television to the daily Italian wrap-up *Notti Mondiali*, featuring an endless stream of talking heads and gratuitous toe-to-head pans of the show's leggy, braless female co-host. You might consider this itinerary an inauspicious start to a marriage. I consider it quite auspicious: Everything I love—at once.

I COULDN'T HAVE HAD THAT BACK home. Watching Italy play Ecuador in a Florentine bar, I was surrounded by shrieking women and gesticulating men. But even in a year of glorious play by the U.S. team, there's neither shrieking nor gesticulating stateside. In fact, during this Cup, American soccer fans more often hear the gripes of our shrill countrymen who disparage the game as foreign and "communist." For years I've been filling a file with the rantings of American sportswriters, who haven't a clue why the world is so nuts for the game. After listening to these critics for so long, I've distilled their complaints into four arguments—one more wrong than the next.

FIRST, THERE IS THE CONDESCENDING reduction of the world's soccer fervor to mere nationalism. By this logic, fans don't love the game per se; they simply love their countries. Soccer provides an outlet for extreme patriotism in European and Latin countries that offer few other outlets for it. Americans, these soccer scorners imply, don't need the game; we can still go to war. But nationalism can't explain a recent scuffle between supporters of Argentina and Brazil: In a remote rural outpost, fans competed to hoist their flags on their village's tallest coconut tree. This friendly disagreement quickly turned into an ugly battle, fought with iron rods and stones, and resulted in ten injured. Nearby, another Argentina fan tried to plant a flag atop a building. The exuberant supporter stumbled and fell onto a power line, causing his electrocution and death. How do I know that love of the game, rather than nationalism, animated these crazed fans? Because all of the above occurred in Bangladesh.

IRONICALLY, AFTER DESCRIBING THE game's fans as jingoistic yahoos, the critics' second tack is to dismiss soccer as a snooze. As Allen Barra recently put it in *Salon*, "It's like that edifying but boring article in *The New York Review of Books* that you feel guilty for not having tackled." According to this line of attack, soccer can't sustain the interest of short-attention-spanned Americans because there isn't enough scoring. But this is bunk. Baseball, which takes about an hour longer to play, doesn't produce many more runs than soccer produces goals. In ice-hockey games, scores of two to one or three to two are the norm. The more sophisticated version of the "nothing happens in soccer" thesis is that even if baseball doesn't produce many more actual runs, it holds your interest through the dramatic tension that builds as runners get on base and hitters go deep into the count. By contrast, soccer looks like an endless sequence of aimless passing and running, until out of the blue someone kicks the ball into the net.

IT LOOKS THAT WAY IF YOU'RE IGNORant of the game, that is. Which is just what American soccerphobes prove when they level their third charge: that the game lacks strategy and sophistication. If you've only been exposed to seven-year-old suburbanites chasing after a ball, it's an easy mistake to make. But Albert Camus, the goalkeeper and philosopher, was closer to the truth when he wrote, "All that I know about morality and the obligations of man, I owe to football." Indeed, consider the existential crises of the midfielder, who must simultaneously guard a section of the field and facilitate offense. When an opposing player enters his section with the ball, he doesn't just try to contain the attacker or rob him of the ball: He eyes the other opponents flooding his zone; he tries to compensate for defensive teammates temporarily out of position because they moved forward to join the attack; he tries to silently communicate with his co-defenders to set an offside trap; he strategizes a counterattack, which usually involves passing to a teammate running an intricate, preplanned pattern. It's multilinear calculus that inspires lively debates about the virtues of formations and stylistic approaches—the Italians' defensive *catenaccio* ("lockdown"), say, versus Holland's attacking, "total" football.

THE FOURTH COMPLAINT CONTRAdicts several of the others: Soccer isn't overly jingoistic or simple; it's overly effete. I hear this Buchananite complaint from some of my supposedly cosmopolitan TNR colleagues. As *The New York Times*' Robert Lipsyte wrote in 1993, America's soccer proponents are "the sporting equivalents of uppity vegetarians, wine tasters, cineastes, dog snobs." And it's true: When American journalists write about soccer, they do sound like dog snobs. Lipsyte's own paper waxes poetic about "lovely aerial passes"; ABC announcers talk about "delightful players." In so doing, they denude the game of its violent side, its touch of the WWF—turning "the people's game" into a yuppie commodity. Such journalism is symptomatic of a deeper societal problem. Upper-middle-class American parents sign up their children for youth soccer leagues because they hope to promote self-esteem and teach cooperation. Progressive schools espouse soccer over baseball because "everyone gets to touch the ball" and over American football because it's "less violent." No phrase captures the game's American ethos better than "soccer mom."

BUT THERE'S A SIMPLE SOLUTION TO this perception problem: Let soccer be soccer. If Lipsyte and Barra actually watched professionals play it, they would see a game far more brutal than basketball, let alone baseball. Athleticism? Few American athletes—pampered by countless time-outs, breaks between innings, huddles, and foul shots—could survive soccer's 90 minutes of nonstop running. And a bicycle kick is every bit as physically intimidating as a tomahawk dunk. With a little work, even a mediocre marketing mind could save American soccer from its Volvo-driving friends and give it street cred with Joe Six Pack. Some American exceptionalists suggest anything that didn't come across the Atlantic from Europe with the turn-of-the-century migration will never catch on with blue-collar America. But if that were really true, the British monarchy wouldn't dominate American tabloids, nor would there have been a British pop invasion. And if multinational corporations like Nike and Budweiser are bringing basketball to Europe and baseball to Latin America and Asia, there's every reason to believe that with their corporate investment in soccer, they could brand the game for the American working class. It would be a delicious, perverse twist on the caricature of the global market—not the Americanization of the world, but the reverse. Let the honeymoon begin.

FRANKLIN FOER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

OVER THE COURSE OF HIS THIRTY-YEAR CAREER, KEN LEE HAS DONE EVERYTHING.

EXCEPT QUIT.

he was still a student in college. Since then, he's tackled a number of jobs in cities across the country. In his first UPS job, Ken unloaded trucks. A promotion took him to Seattle. Then to Greenwich, CT. Then to Atlanta. At UPS, we offer employees diverse experiences to help meet the needs of a diverse workforce. That approach has worked well for us, and for Ken Lee. Today, he's Vice President for International Security at UPS. We can rest easy as long as Ken's in that role. Because no matter what comes up, we know he won't give in.

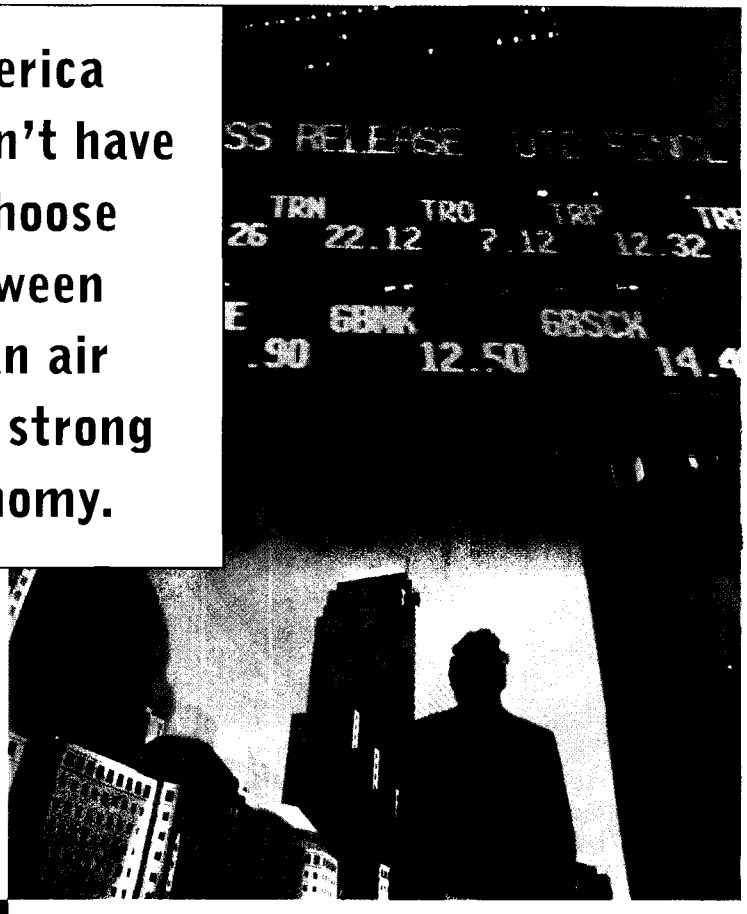
ups

WHAT CAN BROWN DO FOR YOU?

community

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

America shouldn't have to choose between clean air and a strong economy.



We should choose both.

We all agree that cleaner air is good for America, and that's why power companies that generate electricity from coal have worked hard to cut emissions. Even as the use of electricity from coal has tripled in the last 30 years, the rate of emissions has dropped by more than half. And new technologies promise to be even cleaner in the future. With electricity from coal, America has a reliable, affordable, domestic energy source that will power our economy and our lives for the next 250 years.

But the "Clean Power Act" (S. 556) will impose excessive emissions cuts that will drive up electricity prices and threaten the reliability of our electric system. This legislation could cost over $140 billion, adding more than 30 percent to consumer prices and cutting use of America's affordable and reliable energy source—electricity from coal—by at least 40 percent. Instead of helping America, this legislation will put the squeeze on Americans at home and at work.

Oppose S. 556 and support an affordable energy future. CARE THE COALITION FOR AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE ENERGY

We are CARE—a coalition dedicated to the development of a sound energy policy for America. To learn more visit **www.CAREenergy.com**.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED